PLAIN PEOPLE

E. W. HOWE

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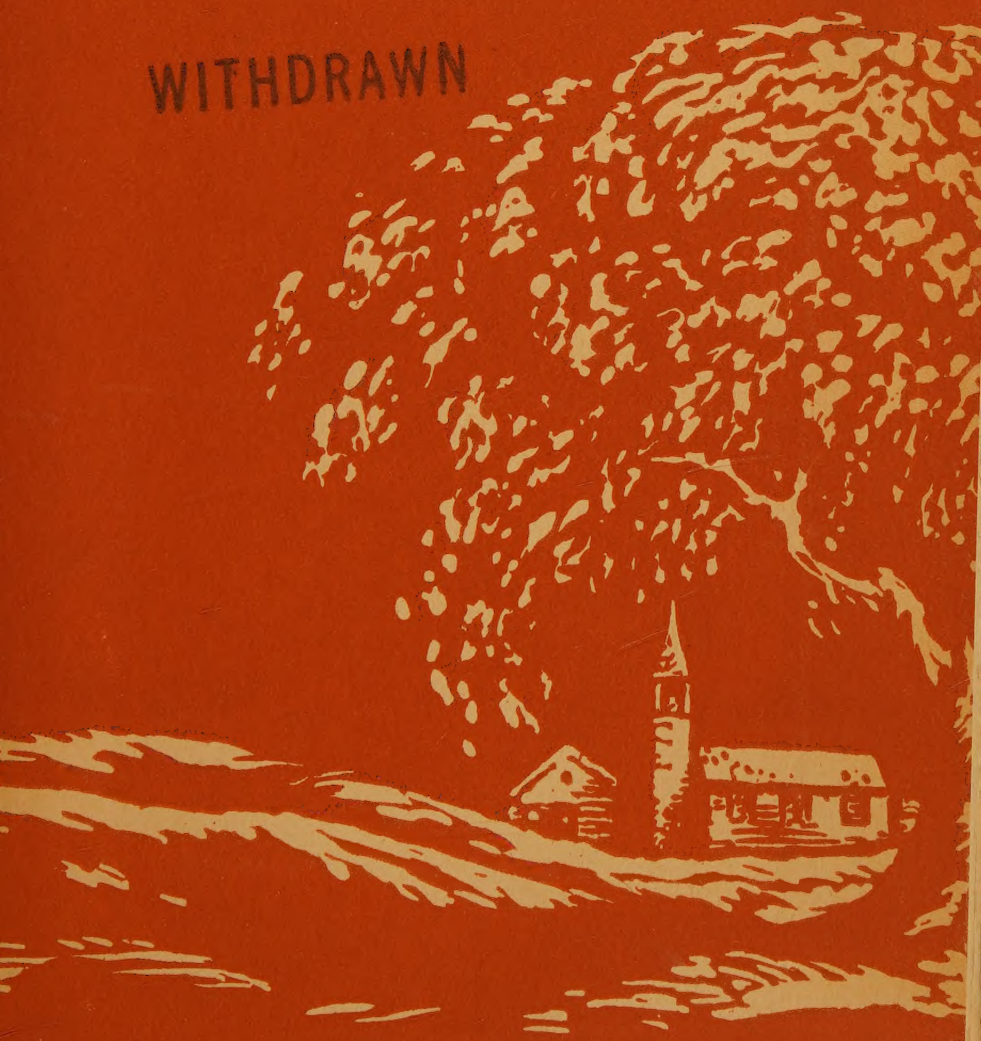

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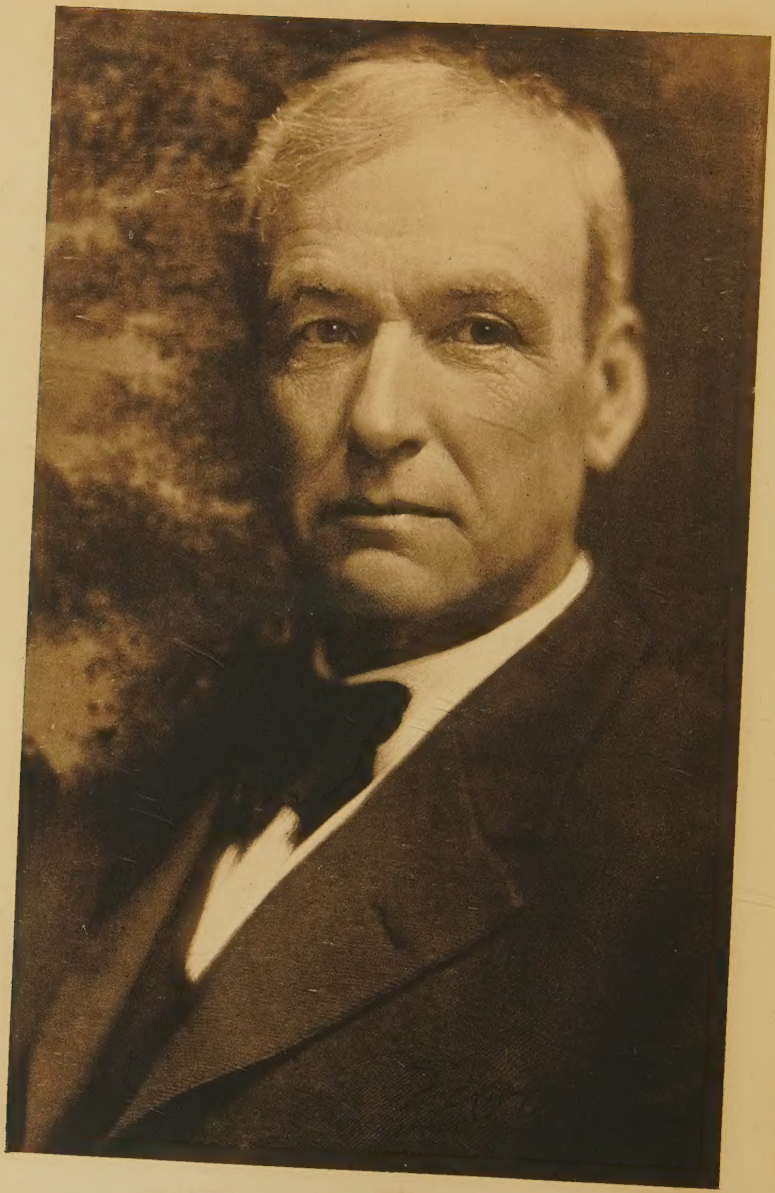

E. O. Stone.

PLAIN PEOPLE

By

E. W. HOWE

Author of

The Story of a Country Town

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CHAPTER I

I come of a long line of plain people, my immediate ancestor being Henry Howe, and his father an Englishman who married a Pennsylvania Dutch woman. In reading biography I have observed that while the writer's ancestors are frequently poor, they have usually been distinguished in some way, but I cannot recall a distinguished man or woman related to me. Indeed, in my youth, Howe seemed an uncommon name. A certain Lord Howe early attracted my attention, but I got no comfort from him, as I found in the revolutionary war he fought my countrymen.

Quite recently, while in New Zealand, I met a London man who had visited Pennsylvania long before, and who believed the Pennsylvania Dutch the best people mankind has produced. This compliment for my grandmother greatly pleased me, for though I had long known my grandfather sprang from a notable race, I have been prejudiced against the English, because of unpleasant things they say about us.

I know the addresses of none of my relatives, except a brother who lives next door, and of his children and my own. In visiting homes, I frequently see old pictures, silver or furniture coming down from ancestors. I have nothing of this kind. The only relic I have of my father is an old spectacle case. I have no picture of my mother, nor anything touched by her

hands. I do not believe she ever had a picture taken.

Whether my father was born in Pennsylvania or Ohio I do not know certainly, but recall that he had brothers in Ohio, and am rather of the opinion that he originated there. Pennsylvania confuses me somewhat in thinking of his early history, because I occasionally heard him talk Dutch, to amuse his neighbors, who regarded any other language than English as a curiosity. I often heard father say his mother was "the better horse" of his parents, as she ruled the family; a statement which attracted my attention, as I had heard Englishmen are dominant husbands.

His people were farmers, and he engaged in that calling all his life, except that he added school teaching, and later Methodist preaching, as ornaments. I heard little about his relatives in Ohio, beyond a brother Samuel, who late in life concluded to quit tobacco. Soon after he became very ill, and the doctor said that as Uncle Samuel hadn't long to live, he might as well solace his last days with his old bad habit, whereupon my Uncle Samuel began chewing again, and soon recovered his health. I think father told this story as an apology for his own use of tobacco.

We also heard of a sister Susan, who became a clerk in one of the departments in Washington. It was one of our family boasts that she was an expert in her line, but I do not recall what it was, and we may have exaggerated her skill. She had sons who engaged in the development of an addition to the city, but we later heard they "broke up," a misfortune attending a good

many of the men in our family. I recall another relative who, in a distant place, was reputed to be a coachman wearing gorgeous livery, but while we were proud of his distinction, we did not boast as much about him as of Aunt Susan. We wondered a good deal that she worked outside her home, as there was no such type where we lived; all the women we knew were what is now called "old-fashioned," and devoted to their homes and men folks, from necessity or pleasure. We knew one husband a little submissive, but his meekness was resented frequently by the other men, who said they would "like to wring her neck," when speaking of his wife, or told what they would do should necessity compel them to deal with her. Lately I met an elderly widow and daughter who spoke so submissively of "Father" that somehow I was reminded of my own boyhood. If at meal time there was a larger number than the table would accommodate, the boys and men ate, and the women and girls waited on them. This custom, tainted with inheritance as far back as Indiana, Ohio, and possibly Pennsylvania, may have influenced me unfairly later when called upon to consider the New Woman.

I do not know the year, but early in life my father moved to Indiana, where he married a woman named Roby. At her death, which seems to have occurred six or seven years later, he married my mother, who brought up two children by his first marriage. I know in a dim sort of way that he lived in a heavily timbered section of Indiana in 1853, where I was born on the

third of May of that year. Many years ago I met an elderly man from that section who told me more about it than I had known before. The man said my father was very religious, and at the head of what was called a "Holiness Association," memory of which continued in the vicinity a long time, for no such shouters are known now. But the leader did no shouting himself; he merely inspired it, as an eloquent speaker is rewarded with applause. My informant further said a village called Treaty was later built on the site of our farm, and that it might as well never have been built, as Treaty is now almost no town at all. My informant believed father's first wife was a widow with one child, but I had always regarded this girl as my half sister. She was an uncomfortable incident in my life, as we cordially disliked each other.

I have never been to Treaty since I left it when three years old, in a covered wagon headed West, and have always understood some of our neighbors, including my mother's father and his family, followed us. Of this journey I remember nothing, although I learned something about it later from the talk of my elders. My recollection begins in Harrison county, Missouri, where the travelers found land to suit them. Whether this was wild, and free to anyone, or whether they paid a low price for it, I do not know. They all selected prairie farms, although in the distance could be seen timber land, from which they later hauled their wood. The settlement was called Fairview, and is so known to this day. I have heard my father say that the

work of clearing his Indiana farm of heavy trees made him prematurely old, and all the neighbor men talked of the Indiana woods as of a nightmare. I frequently read statements that pioneers should be given credit for hardships in opening up the West. I have always lived in the West, and the many pioneers I have known seemed to feel they were better off than they had been before.

Many years ago I met an old Methodist preacher I had known in Fairview. He told me some gossip about my family that rather disturbed me, and I believe he told it for that purpose; that my father's second marriage occurred within a few months after the death of his first wife, which I have heard him mention as though there had been some criticism among the neighbors, his explanation being that with two little children on his hands, there was nothing else for him to do. When he talked in this strain, my mother said nothing.

Not far from the house we built in Missouri was a combined church and school, in a corner of our field, and I have always understood that my father not only built it, but preached without charge for his services. He was the only pastor the church ever had while I lived in its vicinity. In addition, he frequently rode about on horseback to preach and pray in the homes of the more distant neighbors. I often accompanied him on these journeys, which usually began Saturday night, but we were always home early Monday to begin the week's work.

I visited a good many families in the course of these

journeys, but do not recall many of them distinctly, except that as a rule they lived in one-room houses built of logs. On one side was a fireplace, in which they cooked. On the opposite side of the one big room were three four-poster beds, and under each one a trundle-bed for the children. The beds had no springs, but were "corded" with ropes. When the beds began to sag, it was one of the chores of the men and boys to tighten the ropes, and place fresh straw in the mattresses. Feather beds were common in the better families, the feathers being obtained from geese, ducks, and sometimes chickens. I distinctly recall the women occasionally renovating the feathers in the beds, by steaming.

The women cooked in the fireplaces by means of hanging pots, and in what they called "spiders," great skillets with legs. The skillets had iron tops, and live coals were placed on these, to assist in the cooking. At bed time father and I were compelled to undress in the presence of the family, and my first recollection of politeness is of parents and children steadily gazing into the fireplace while we were exposed.

In addition to his circuit riding, every summer father held camp meetings, where collected people from a large territory. I always went with him when he selected the sites, and helped clean up the brush for the platforms and benches, and the covered wagons and tents in which the people lived five or six days.

The first wickedness I ever heard of came with attendance on these camp meetings, for on their edges

collected strange men who sold keg beer and whisky in bottles, and their patrons engaged in rough language and fighting. In our immediate neighborhood all were at least afraid of the church, but here I found a good many who were not. Being curious and active, I went everywhere, and heard men ridicule the services for which we were assembled.

All the other children joined the church early, but I never did, nor was I invited to. This seems remarkable, but it is my recollection; I was always so much of an unbeliever in the religion of my father and his neighbors that they let me alone. I recall that my brother Jim, after joining the church, was moaning in bed the night it happened, because of his sins, and I mocked him. He soon lost his temper, and we engaged in a fight. Fortunately my father was out of the house, and only mother caught us at it. On hearing the cause of the disturbance, she joined me in laughing about it. Jim soon forgot his anger, and laughed with us. Many years afterwards he used to say that if he went to the bad place, I would be responsible, as he once started right, and that I made such fun of him that he again became a sinner.

My mother was Elizabeth Irwin, and, so far as I am able to recall, members of her family were not religious. Her father was Charles Irwin, a quiet man who made shingles, and his wife doctor for all our neighbors, with backwoods experience her only diploma. Except my mother, who was weakly, their children were all large men and women, and disposed to good looks.

Father was a smaller man than the Irwins, and may have been disposed to envy their finer stature, for he always said they were shiftless.

From going about with him, I had very intimate knowledge of the people attending his religious services, and some of them acted in a way that seemed queer to me. These I mocked in private, greatly to the amusement of my brothers and sisters, and other children with whom we came in contact. I recall giving a performance of this kind on one occasion, my brothers having agreed to do my evening chores as reward for the impiety. Suddenly my mother appeared, and as I loved her, and wasn't afraid, I continued. I recall to this day that she laughed good-naturedly at my imitations of characters she knew as well as I did. Afterwards, when I engaged in mocking our neighbors, some of the children would run to call mother, if father was not at home. But she frequently warned me not to let father catch me, which he did once, and her warning was well timed, for he gave me a whipping.

That was a day of child whipping, and in strong contrast with the indulgence of to-day. Whether the old plan was better than the new I am not able to make up my mind. I learn, and come to conclusions, slowly; when I reach my final days I shall say of a great many other things: "I do not know which is best." If the old Fairview men could come back now, and see present changed conditions as to children and women, I often wonder what they would say. Probably they would be as helpless as the men are now.

A vivid recollection of my childhood is of fathers and mothers leading their children off, the children screaming: "I'll be good! I'll be good!" One night, when we were moving from Indiana to Missouri, a big boy named Joe Adams resisted his father when he attempted to whip him. Man and boy were almost equally matched, as they struggled and fought, the boy screaming he was too old to be whipped, and had repeatedly given warning he would not submit to it again. The most pitiful picture in my memory is of the boy's mother hysterically crying, and not daring to interfere. One man tried to end the fight by assisting in subduing the boy, but Bill Scott pushed him back and stopped the fight, telling the father he should be ashamed of himself.

There was a good deal of excitement about the affair several days, Mr. Adams saying he would conquer his son if it was the last act of his life. The boy left camp that night, but next day we heard he was with the men and boys who were driving loose stock in the rear. Joe Adams was not a bad boy, and food was sent him by the women. He didn't appear in camp for a week, but came in timidly one night at the end of that time. He first stopped and talked with the women and children at the wagon farthest from his own, where his parents sat, the father surly and the mother in tears. Joe slowly advanced from wagon to wagon toward his mother, and finally stood beside her as she sat in an old hickory-bottomed chair they had brought along. She put her arms around him and sobbed so hys-

terically all could hear. The father said nothing, and was motionless, looking at the ground; which may have been due to Bill Scott, who had approached, and was standing almost within reach of the boy. Finally the father arose and walked out into the dark, crying, as we all were. The mother tidied Joe up a little, and then went into the family wagon and brought out some special delicacy she had been saving for him. That night Joe slept in his usual place, and we heard no more of the affair. Bill Scott was a professional farm hand, and it was said he would never amount to anything else; but he was the most popular member of the party, and the most capable. He helped the tired women with a gentleness and politeness I sincerely admired, since I had never seen anything of the kind before, and his sympathies were always with the children when they were imposed on. All the men were a little afraid of him in an argument or in wrestling.

My father ceased whipping me only after I went to work for myself, at about the age of thirteen, but I have observed that I have been whipped steadily since when deserving it, by the frowns and grumblings of the neighbors. The old Arabs said the whip was sent from heaven for our good; certainly we never escape it.

My father was a cross, dissatisfied man, and often whipped me, but conscience-whipping was worse: I was saved from ruin not by a switch laid on by an angry, unreasonable father, but by conscience-whipping. Let those I have wronged know I have been punished. I believe in sinners brought to repentance by worldly ex-

perience that sin does not pay; our best people are sinners with sufficient experience to realize that a sinner is, first of all, a fool.

I was brought up in my own father's family like a bound-boy, for if he ever had affection for me, I never knew it. He drove me to work early, and kept me steadily at it. One of my recollections is of his saying that I had been an expense to him until I was seven years old. I think I was naturally a lazy boy, and now confess his driving me to work was a benefit. Early in life I so thoroughly acquired the habit of industry that I have never recovered from it: to this day I work rapidly. Almost every afternoon, now that I am old, I work in the field for exercise with my brother, an industrious man. Frequently he says to me:

"Don't work so fast! You will hurt yourself."

I learned the habit to quickly complete my daily tasks, that I might have time to play. I could not have been of much assistance on the farm from the age of seven, when I was put to work, until eleven, when we moved to town, but I had my regular hours, as the others had. We threshed wheat by placing it in circular piles, and driving horses over it. My work was to drive the horses. We cut wheat with old-fashioned cradles, and I carried jugs of water to the cradlers. I stripped sorghum in the field, helped when the juice was pressed out, and later in boiling to turn it into molasses. I husked the down-row at corn-picking time. Another of my regular duties was to help mother make tallow candles, using a tin mold holding six. I have seen

houses lighted at night with a rag burning in a saucer of grease, but we always used candles. Another of my duties was to grate corn meal for mush. Probably I did this only in the fall when the ears were young and tender, but at this distance it seems to me I did it every day. We had what we called a "long killing" of hogs in the fall, and a "short killing" in the spring, and I helped in these operations. When the lard was rendered out in a great kettle, what we called "cracklings" were left, and the children ate them with relish. "Cracklings" were the first luxury I knew. I do not believe I ever heard of Christmas while in the country, and we had few luxuries except a taffy made from sorghum molasses. Sometimes we were permitted to parch corn, grind it in a coffee mill, and eat it with cream.

It always seemed to me father was unnecessarily harsh with all of us. Once I had a toothache; possibly one of the more stubborn of my first set. He knocked it out with a cold chisel and hammer. It was an efficient way, but nearly killed me, and he whipped me for crying. The whippings were not brutal, but painful and humiliating, and I scarcely escaped a day. My Aunt Sarah, who was at our house a good deal, and whom I sincerely loved, used to say that when I was whipped, I dropped to the ground at the first stroke, and screamed as though losing my life. This caused father to let up somewhat, and Aunt Sarah used to laugh at my way of protecting myself, from which I imagined she did not think I was very severely punished. My half brother Jim was stubborn, and would not cry,

which only resulted in the switch being laid on harder.

I am disposed to believe that in managing me father did what he considered his duty. He was brought up, no doubt, as he brought me up, and knew no other way. I am grateful that I have found life less harsh than his had been. He seemed to be a natural backwoodsman, and usually left a community when it became civilized.

He was a singer, and used the talent in his religious services. I think he really had an unusually agreeable voice. There is a famous Italian baritone named Amato. I have his records for the Victrola, and frequently play them, for the voices of the two men were actually much alike, although one was world-famous, and the other an uncultured backwoodsman. He could write music, and arranged duets in which my childish treble fitted well with his mature voice. I am sure he took me with him on his trips because of my ability to assist him in his songs, for my company did not seem to please him at any other time.

Shadows of men and women come and go in my memory, but I am able to recall distinctly only a few of our neighbors at Fairview. I specially love the memory of George Meek and his family, who lived nearest us. I was frequently permitted to go to their house, after I had completed my tasks, and most of the enjoyment I knew while on the farm I have them to thank for, although my mother's brother, Joe Irwin, and my half brother Jim, both older than I, were kind to me.

The first special friend I ever had was one of the Meek boys, but it was so long ago, and there were so many of the Meeks, that I do not recall whether it was Henry, Pascal or Abram. I have not seen him in more than sixty years: if he had wife or children, I do not know it, I am so completely separated from my youth.

I must have been a very little boy when Mary Meek died, and my grief was profound, as we both attended the first Fairview school. Somehow I recall that her body was moved in the graveyard, and I was present; I recall the dripping coffin almost slipping back as it was removed from the grave, and some men getting under it: that was an early terror of my life, and I cannot forget it. Of all the other people and incidents at Fairview, there is something unpleasant to recall, but of George Meek and members of his family I have only pleasant recollections.

Not long ago I read the biography of Henry Wallace, whose son became Secretary of Agriculture. I was greatly impressed, because Henry Wallace's family was as religious as ours, and lived in a rural section; I think in New England. But the neighbors and parents were kind, and they lived comfortably, pleasantly, usefully and intelligently. I believe we might have so lived at Fairview, for all seemed intelligent enough: I do not recall a fool in the neighborhood. But there was some dominating influence that was wrong. I have often regretted George Meek did not control in all Fairview as he did in his own household.

Another neighbor I recall distinctly was named Vea-

zey Price, famous because he had no children. Large families of children were the rule when I was young, and so Veazey Price and Aunt Mahala, his wife, who had none, attracted our wonder. After moving to town I knew a man who had only one child, but a married couple with no children at all was unknown to me until many years later. It is common enough in these days, but I never hear of such a case even now without wondering how it happened.

During the winter there was school in the church, but the only teacher I recall distinctly was a man named Hayworth, who did not belong in our neighborhood. I very dimly remember another, a young woman, and that she taught in a log schoolhouse before the church was built. My Uncle Nate, only eight months older than myself, always came by our house in the morning, and we went to school together. At noon we exchanged special things from our dinner baskets. Once he brought a kind of pie of which I was fond, and I traded him something for a bite of it. Without my knowing it he had placed his finger under the pie, to mark the size of the bite, which he had decided was to be small. With a view of taking more than he intended, I grabbed quickly, and bit his finger. He yelled dismally, and we were both whipped by Hayworth. The last time I saw Nate he was still carrying the scar, and showed it to me.

He was about twenty-five at the time, and I thought him a very creditable young man. The farmers were having one of their regular revolts when I visited him,

and Nate was one of their spokesmen. I recall fierce arguments I had with him, in which he triumphed, for he was an excellent talker, and I was surprised at his fund of information: probably most of it manufactured for the speaking tours in which he was then engaged. I do not know whether he is now living or dead.

When my Uncle Joe had a family, a son was named Charles, for his grandfather, and is now, or was, sometime ago, General Livestock Agent of the Union Pacific Railroad, with headquarters at Cheyenne, Wyoming. I have heard he had a good deal to do with originating the famous Frontier Show at Cheyenne, in which I once saw him appear with two of his children. One of his sons, Floyd, a noted trick rider, was killed while bulldogging a steer. Charley Irwin had a daughter named Joella, for his father and mother, and I saw her win a relay race at Cheyenne, easily defeating a famous woman from Oklahoma. Charley Irwin was the owner of a Wild West Show then in Cheyenne, and I ate dinner in his camp with the Indians and performers. I hear now occasionally that he owns race horses, and breeds polo ponies on a ranch in Wyoming. Quite recently he won a ten-thousand-dollar race and cup at Tia Juana in Mexico, and later I saw his picture in a newspaper: an enormously large man—I have been told that when he sits down, two chairs are required to accommodate him.

I wish to apologize at this late day for once treating the rough rider, Charley Irwin, of Wyoming, very in-

considerately. A long time ago, when a boy, he appeared in Atchison with his father, my Uncle Joe, who had been burned out by hot winds in Western Kansas, and was returning to his wife's people in Missouri in a covered wagon. Evidently Uncle Joe had come for a visit, and while I sincerely loved him, I did not get along with Aunt Mary, his wife, who never liked me. I was married at the time, and my wife had notable fondness for kin; she was always writing to distant relatives, and inviting them to visit us. In thinking up excuses to get rid of entertaining Aunt Mary, I thought of a pretense that my wife did not like her. The two women had really never met: I doubt if they knew of each other's existence, but I pretended to a coolness on my wife's side toward Aunt Mary, and Uncle Joe so well knew about such things that he drove on.

I was so much amused over my joke that I told some of the men around town, and recall that two of them —the mayor, and the claim agent of a railroad—at once hastened along the road Uncle Joe had taken, intending to tell him it was all in fun, and that my wife was specially fond of her relations. But it happened they did not find Uncle Joe. I thus got a bad start with the most noted kinsman I have.

One of my impressions is that I never learned anything at school, which I quit for good at an early age. I never studied grammar at all, and common fractions so discouraged me I could not get the faintest glimmer of their meaning. Somehow I learned to read at home

before being sent to school: I suppose I wondered what the books about the house were for, and, being lonely, slowly and in stumbling fashion found out, in time adding ability to read letters. When father went to the nearest post office, he returned with mail for half the neighborhood, and I was sent to deliver it. I remember that on these trips geese hissed at me in house-yards, and that I dreaded them as much as cross dogs. If those to whom I delivered letters could not read them, I gave assistance, causing much astonishment. There was so much in the letters about gloomy woods, and toil and hard times that I formed a poor opinion of the country the Fairview people had come from: only recently I passed through Indiana rapidly on a railroad train, and was astonished to find it so beautiful.

My education actually began when I went to work in a printing office, at about the age of eleven. A typesetter cannot avoid learning to spell correctly. If I made too many errors in my proof galleys, I was whipped for them, and, desiring to avoid the whippings, learned to spell as correctly as I could. Likewise I learned the construction of sentences. From that day to this I have been educated as a natural process, without particularly desiring it: I do not remember that I ever had an ambition for a great education. All the best men I have known have been educated, but many of them have attended primary schools only briefly, and college not at all.

Such education as I have was acquired in sentences

found here and there in reading; in suggestions from conversation. Both print and conversation are pretty generally uninteresting, even trifling, but every day one encounters wise sayings. I piece these together, and retain them: I have never read a dull book because it has been highly recommended as educational. If a book does not interest me, it can do me no good; I do not believe in the man who wrote it. I am willing to read anything well written; a book need not agree with my own conclusions to interest me: every writer frequently exposes brass when trying to show gold. I do not wish to retain an unsound opinion; only opinions that will stand the test of opposition. Nor do I wish to encounter arguments on my side of the case; I have already supplied them. If anyone can demonstrate I am on the wrong road, he has obliged me.

We had books in our house at Fairview, but I remember none of them save the blue-back McGuffey school readers, and "Watson's Commentaries," an exposition of the Bible. I presume father greatly admired this author, since he gave me his name. Where the "Edgar" came from I do not know, but have been satisfied with it: it seems to me Edgar is a better name than either Edward or Edwin, if one is to go through life known as "Ed." Quite recently I went back to Fairview to visit the old farm. The house in which we lived then stood in the middle of a pasture, and had been abandoned long before. In going through it I found on a shelf in the pantry a piece of *The Christian Advocate*, yellow with age, and pasted to one of the boards.

Probably it had been placed there by my mother, as I recall no other publication we received; our literature was made up of *The Christian Advocate*, religious books and McGuffey's readers.

Ours was a remote section, and I have wondered since there was so little game, outside of prairie chickens, so numerous that every morning at certain seasons we could hear their drumming on the prairie. One Sunday morning, after a heavy fall of snow, we awoke to find a tree near the house full of prairie chickens. Father hastily fired both barrels of a shotgun into the tree, and killed eleven. It was long a joke in the neighborhood that a preacher fired a gun on Sunday, but father rather enjoyed it, having killed so many, though he said that in his excitement he forgot the sacredness of the day. The tree was called a silver maple, and we children believed that when it was old enough to bear, the fruit would be silver dollars.

Old Lee, a renter on our farm, made long trips looking for deer, but I never heard of his finding any. My brother Jim and I were once sent on a journey, with team and wagon, to sell a beef hide. On our return we suddenly encountered a great flock of wild turkeys. It took us two weeks to induce father to permit us to look for them. He gave us a double-barreled rifle for the purpose, a gun of a type I have never seen since: one barrel above the other, and we had one load each, and no more. The upper barrel was considered the better, and somehow I traded Jim out of this. After a weary walk of hours, we came into the vicinity where

we had seen the turkeys. Then we crawled a long distance, and looked into the place where the game had been. I think I was never more surprised in my life than when I found no turkeys there. On our way home we concluded to fire our bullets at a mark, and Jim got his hand under the lower hammer while sighting, and hurt himself. He was always so good a boy, and so sincere a friend, that I let him fire my upper barrel if he would quit crying.

There were many quail in the neighborhood, and Old Lee, our renter, was able to catch them, on damp days, with a net. One Sunday I went with him on such an expedition, and my share of the catch was twenty. My sister Sarah Jane "told on" me, and for the impiety I was not allowed to eat any of the quail, though other members of the family did. In addition, I received a whipping. I think of Old Lee now as the first unusual man I ever knew: without knowing why, I liked to be with him. He was poor, and somewhat shiftless, but generally said to be "as sharp as tacks," and of amiable disposition.

Father was easily the leading man of his neighborhood, and never lacked prosperity. He owned a good deal of wild land, and his farming operations were quite extensive. The only five-hundred-dollar bill I ever saw is a recollection from that remote day, and he had it. In thinking of the old days in my life, I always conclude we had plenty to wear and eat, and that my father was a good provider, although he grumbled a good deal about it. One of our staple articles of food

we called "thickened milk," which I heard of quite recently for the first time in sixty years, in connection with the statement from an old lady that it would be good for me now.

Father's brother Joseph once came to our house on a visit, when I was called "a good chunk of a boy." The Missouri county in which we lived adjoined Iowa, and my Uncle Joseph came from that state. He looked almost exactly like father, except that he was better dressed, and gentler in manner. He told us of his children, and the incidents suggested that theirs was a more contented family than ours. I recall that after he went away, father grumbled about the debasing luxury in which Uncle Joseph and his family evidently lived. When Uncle Joseph returned home, I sent his son some childish possession I was fond of, and he never replied in any way. He wrote me recently, acknowledging eighty-one years, but said nothing about my gift. I find myself still a little resentful.

I never saw any other member of my father's family except an Uncle Jacob, who came from Illinois on a visit. Uncle Jacob looked like father, too, and was also gentler. I have always loved this early memory of Uncle Joseph and Uncle Jacob, because they looked like my father, and had a gentleness I believe their brother might have practiced to his advantage.

While living on the Fairview farm I do not recall a purely social gathering. Occasionally the children "stayed all night" with each other, and, if they misbehaved, were whipped and sent home to learn better

manners, it being generally admitted it was the duty as well as privilege of a householder to correct all children under his roof. Once a play was given in the church by the young men: an actor was carried in to represent a murdered man, and an oration delivered over his body, but there was so much indignation that thereafter the occasional spelling and singing schools were given up. I recall but one occasion when father and mother visited a neighbor's house in the evening, and I was whipped on their return, Sarah Jane having "told on me." My offense was connected with parching field corn; we had not heard of the popping kind. I doubt if there is in the world to-day a neighborhood as melancholy as ours was about the time of the beginning of the Civil War.

I note that in my old age I do not like salads, so widely recommended for health. I did not know them in my youth; I was brought up on meat, gravy, bread, potatoes, milk, butter and pie, with green corn, watermelons, and wild blackberries and plums in season. Occasionally we made trips to the woods for nuts. There were no bearing fruit trees on our farm when I lived there, although occasionally father made long journeys to older settlements, and returned with apples. Gardens were not common in my youth; I do not believe we had one on the farm, nor when we moved to town.

I often wonder when I first heard of a bathroom; I did not actually live in a house with one until I had a family of my own. In the country we were taught to wash our faces and hands, but I do not recall the Saturday night bath in the kitchen which so amuses

modern town people. In Fairview we had the same sanitary arrangements we had when moving from Indiana to Missouri, in covered wagons. I speak elsewhere of coming of a long line of plain people. Probably I was plainer in early youth than most of my readers.

CHAPTER II

One Saturday afternoon father and I went to one of our old appointments to hold services. I can remember the family we visited, and the house in which they lived, but not the name. Early in the evening half a dozen men and women dropped in, and there was a short prayer service. The talk got around to the war then threatening, and a good deal of regret was expressed that Christian men did not get together and pray for delivery from armed conflict; all seemed to believe the question was entirely a religious one, and starting in Fairview.

A man named Bondurant lived a short distance away, in the woods, and there was considerable regret expressed that he was so unreasonable, from which I gathered that Bondurant disagreed with our contention that slavery was not consistent with divine law. Finally it was thought to be the duty of those present to go over to the Bondurant place, in the hope of insuring peace.

The men started after nightfall, and I went along. They tried at first to drive the boys back, but were not very serious about it, so we were soon leading, and in the way. When we arrived, after a considerable walk, all went in, and father asked Bondurant, already in a bad humor because of a number of strangers entering his home unbidden, if he would object to

a prayer. Being a Christian man, he could not very well refuse, whereupon we all knelt and father prayed with great fervor.

I was looking slyly about while on my knees, and it seemed to me the situation was a tense one. I noted that Bondurant was a tall man of a type unusual in our neighborhood, and was afraid of him; I had heard of him vaguely as an aristocrat and slave owner, and believe he came from Kentucky at about the time we arrived from Indiana.

At first father prayed in the old manner I was familiar with, and then touched on the power of prayer in settling differences. Later he mentioned the war cloud, the subject then uppermost in the minds of men, and said a good many things about liberty that made me shiver, as he was a violent partisan. At last he said Amen, and we arose from our knees. For a time there was awkward silence, and then Bondurant asked in an angry, insolent way:

"I wonder if you realize that you could be sent to the penitentiary for that prayer?"

Father replied that he did not, and the argument soon became heated, bitter things being said on both sides. The Bondurant women folks were present, looking frightened, and several hired men were standing at the open door, a negro or two among them. Bondurant soon roughly ordered us all out of his house, and we went, feeling foolish, which feeling possessed us as we walked back through the woods. Father tried to strike up a hymn as we stumbled along through the

darkness, but some one suggested that the music of a fife and drum would be more appropriate.

We had been rudely rebuffed, and knew it. Father had always been king in his home and neighborhood, and no one had before objected to his reign. It was an amazing thing to me, too.

That night I occupied with him the middle of three beds in the one big room of the house we were visiting, and noticed that no one slept very well; even the children in the trundle-beds were restless, as I was. At a late hour, when I was still awake, father raised his head, and called softly to his host, who slept in an adjoining bed:

"Wesley, are you awake?"

Wesley replied that he was, and father said:

"Was I well within my rights as a Christian man in going over to Bondurant's?"

Wesley replied that he thought so, but the answer somehow did not assure me. Probably it did not father, for they talked softly back and forth for quite awhile, and it was easy to see that both were disturbed.

We went our usual round the next day, and everywhere the Bondurant incident was talked of, to the exclusion of nearly everything else. At the house where we spent the night, a crowd so considerable collected that it amounted to almost a war meeting.

Someone brought word that Pryor Plank, Bondurant's pastor, was furious, and he appeared at our house next morning soon after our return; I had been hearing for a considerable time that he pretended he could take

the Bible and convince anyone that slavery had divine approval. Plank was soon so violent that father said to him:

"If I were not a Christian man, I'd give you a whipping for your insolence."

Plank became more furious than ever at this, and said it would be dangerous for any man to lay a hand on him.

"To convince you that you had better keep your temper," father said, with a laugh which sounded like a curse, "I'll show you."

And then the two men closed and struggled as if fighting, the contest ending by father throwing Plank violently to the ground. Then Plank laughed in an unnatural way, thinking he had better, and they walked into the house, Plank brushing dust from his clothes. There was blood about his mouth, which he wiped away with a handkerchief.

Both tried to be good-natured when they sat down in our best room, and began to argue and refer to the Bible and "Watson's Commentaries," but were soon violently quarreling. Pryor Plank was specially indignant because father had not come to him to discuss the Bible instead of to Bondurant, while father referred heatedly to being ordered out of Bondurant's house.

Soon the neighbors began dropping in, as though the encounter had been expected, and when the number became so great our best room would not accommodate them, it was agreed to adjourn to the church in

the afternoon. Pryor Plank was invited to remain for dinner, but refused rather roughly. Then we ate without father asking a blessing, a thing I had never before known him to neglect.

The neighbors also went away, as if to collect a crowd for the afternoon. Pryor Plank seemed to have gone after reinforcements, too, for when he appeared at the church, Bondurant and several others were with him. New men on our side also appeared, and the excitement was as great as though news of a declaration of war had come from town.

Rules of some sort were agreed upon, and Pryor Plank opened. He made a fiery talk, and when father's turn came, he replied with equally strong language. The debate went on for three days, the crowd steadily increasing. I knew somehow that many of those who appeared were Abolitionists from Iowa, and that some others were from counties below ours, where there was more sentiment denying that the Bible prohibited slavery. I knew also that some of the men were armed.

Two of the strangers who dropped in looked like preachers, and frequently asked to be heard from the floor. When permission was granted, they urged that only Bible phases of the question be discussed. These men seemed to be on opposite sides of the question, and acted as though they were keen to get into the discussion.

When father went home at night, he remained up late, to search "Watson's Commentaries," and, on go-

ing to the church in the morning, took voluminous notes with him. He paid no attention to his boys, so we did as we pleased, and attended the debate.

On the afternoon of the fourth day, Perry Devers, the sheriff, a small man known to be of undoubted courage, walked in, and quietly sat down among the other men, most of whom knew him. Father was speaking at the time, and seemed to believe the sheriff had heard of his success in confounding the arguments of Pryor Plank, for he was particularly eloquent and forceful until he closed. The sheriff then walked up to the pulpit, and served a warrant. At that time there was a law in Missouri providing a heavy penalty for inciting slaves to rebellion, and some one had sworn to such a complaint.

The appearance of the sheriff greatly increased the excitement, for the meeting immediately broke up, and the men gathered in groups in the yard. The sheriff told father to appear in town the following Monday morning, as court was in session; his widow told me long afterward that her husband was bitterly criticized because he did not bring the prisoner to town in disgrace.

The bickering in the church yard became so threatening that Perry Devers warned the men to disperse. The sheriff's power over the angry men was so great as to cause me to specially remark it, for he was small, and seemed ill. I looked at him frequently to see if he was armed, but apparently he carried no weapon except the majesty of the law, and a pencil, which he held

in his right hand, and shook at those he warned to keep the peace. Occasionally he used the pencil to make notes in a little book, as if putting down the names of those specially belligerent. After somewhat calming the excited men, he mounted his horse and rode away.

Early Monday morning father started to town, riding the horse which carried us on the preaching trips, and I rode behind him, as though he had a vague notion that somewhere in the court proceedings we would sing some of our songs, to influence the judge, the jury and the crowd. For a mile or two I was familiar with everything I saw, but after that there were many questions I wanted to ask, and did not dare to, for father was the sort of man who had little conversation with his boys except to tell them what to do. On reaching Pole Cat creek, he stopped to let the horse drink, and I recalled that in rainy times it was a dangerous crossing; a neighbor of ours had once attempted to ford Pole Cat creek when it was high, and was drowned; his horses and wagon were carried half a mile by the flood. After that the stream was a terror in our neighborhood, and when a man went to town his wife and children begged him to be careful in case a rainstorm came up.

A number of men were waiting for our appearance at the county seat, as the trial was to come up at eleven o'clock that morning. I soon realized that the town was full of excited men, and that many of them were armed. I saw Perry Devers, the sheriff, going everywhere among them in his quiet way, demanding peace.

I soon realized, also, that father's friends were in the majority, because of the great number of Iowa men who had come over the border; it seemed to be the Iowa men who were causing most of the disturbance the sheriff was trying to keep down, for they talked louder and more threateningly than any of the others.

When the groups began moving toward the court house, I followed, finding myself at last in a large room upstairs, with a judge on the bench. I have been informed that the court was opened formally, and father placed on trial, but the confusion on the street greatly increased in the court room. Men in the audience, with guns in their hands, defied the judge to send the prisoner to jail, and the judge became very indignant. At last he seemed awed by the angry crowd, and ordered the prisoner admitted to bail in a large amount; whereupon the men on our side cheered, and started down stairs.

It developed that they were going to sign a bail bond then being prepared. For hours the office of the clerk of the court was filled with men signing the bail bond, or waiting to qualify for signing. I do not recall positively the year this occurred, but probably it was in the spring of 1860. An old printer told me lately that in that year he was employed in a weekly newspaper office in the East, and that he put in type an account of the affair clipped from the New York *Tribune*, for it was a very violent and pronounced Abolitionist victory.

The excitement continued until toward evening,

when father started home, but was stopped by so many who wished to talk to him that we did not get away until late. I heard some of the men telling him the bail bond was still being signed, although it already contained hundreds of names.

Five or six horsemen accompanied us for a time, but finally it was decided there was no danger, and we reached home after nightfall. Mother seemed greatly worried, and came down to the gate to meet us, a thing I had not known her to do before.

CHAPTER III

When I heard of the battle of Bull Run I believed it began in our neighborhood, the first incident being the prayer father offered at the Bondurant home in the woods, and that the fighting was to decide whether the Bible favored slavery.

The next development was a celebration the Abolitionists arranged in Bethany, the county seat. A noted man from a long distance away came to our house, and stayed all night: for a long time I remembered his name, but do not now. He slept in our best room, and we were in awe of him: that he was a great man could be easily seen, for he was better dressed than anyone I had ever seen before, and his manners more correct. Evidently he was not a farmer, and all the men I had known before were of that calling. I respected him unreservedly as of a superior type, and believed he came from the great outside world where things were done better than we did them in Fairview.

The day of the celebration we took the great man to town, where he was to make a speech, surrounded with loyal men from Iowa and our part of Missouri. The top of a wagon had been widened and lengthened, and on this there was placed a huge log, from which a young man, dressed to represent Abraham Lincoln, was splitting rails. This was the first time I ever heard of Lincoln. The wagon was pulled by ten yoke of oxen.

Four of the oxen belonged to us, and I thought they looked strange in so great a company.

I do not remember the speech in Bethany; only incidents a boy would take more interest in. Almost everyone in our neighborhood went to town that day, including many of the children. Two of these were the Winter boys, and they stole so much from the stores, and so generously divided with me, that I thought the day a great success. I have often wondered what became of Hard Winter, for he was not afraid of town people, as I was. I suppose his name was Hardy Winter, but this had been shortened to Hard, and I believed it was a reference to his hard character, for he was an adept at thievery, and never caught, to my knowledge. I went with him into several stores, and his indifference to the proprietor, his cleverness in getting what he wanted, was about the most marvelous thing I had ever seen. If anywhere in town I encountered something I did not know about, Hard Winter found out, whereas I was afraid to ask questions of the mighty people in town. I would much like to know what became of the boy, he was so unusual. He had it in him to become distinguished, one way or the other.

In the afternoon, when the parade and the speaking were over, some town men attempted to turn over the wagon on which was Abe Lincoln's log. There was immediately opposition from the Abolitionists, and a fight. I was timid, and kept out of it, but Hard Winter went in promptly, and scratched and screamed and fought. He was an adept at throwing stones, and I

admired the manner in which he hit several of the opposition. One of our men finally fought almost alone, the others having deserted him, and I recall his doing well against three or four others. Finally he said:

"Men, I can't whip the whole town!"

This appeal to fairness was effective, for in a little while he was in peaceful possession. Hard Winter and I rode home on the wagon with the victor, and, as the pace was slow, did not arrive until long after dark. One of the men held me on his lap, and I listened with awe to their talk. It was about war, and forming a company. They agreed that father was to be the captain, and later I told him about it: I do not recall ever before telling him anything in which he seemed to take an equal interest.

I can only recall the larger incidents of that remote time: the next thing that stands out is a meeting in the church where farewell was to be said to a company of volunteers that had been organized. Father had been selected as captain, and preached a patriotic sermon, dressed in his uniform. Someone had found a drum, and as everyone took a turn at it, there was considerable interruption. Father's sermon was about the war, and slavery; he frequently declared the Holy Bible said all men should be free. He spoke of the dead in battle, sacrifices to God, and the women cried softly, as they did at prayer meetings when their burdens were mentioned.

Then the men assembled in the yard, the drum beating furiously, and the women crying more than ever.

The men went through evolutions, and did them very well, as though they had been practicing when I was not present. I supposed they would march away to war at once, but at a word of command, they broke ranks, and did not actually go away until a week later. When they did go, they went in wagons, and had a great amount of baggage. The horse father and I had ridden on the preaching trips was led behind one of the wagons. Some weeks later we found him with the other horses in our pasture. Evidently he did not like war, and had deserted. It was long considered a marvelous thing that the animal was able to find his way back to lonely Fairview.

I have a dim recollection of some of the soldiers later coming home. One had been shot entirely through the chest in a battle, but, strangely enough, without much damage. He was an object of such curiosity that he was barely able to keep his shirt on, the people were so anxious to see the wound. All those who returned came to our house, to report about father. They called him "Cap," and I did not know at first to whom they referred.

That was certainly sixty-six years ago, but I recall the men telling how they stole the "Cap's" Bible, as a joke. He also had a book in which he had written the notes and words of his songs, and this was frequently taken.

Once a party of three soldiers came to our house with a prisoner, a wretched boy, and mother fed them. I do not know what they later did with the prisoner,

the charge against him, or who he was: he did not belong in our neighborhood. When the men were at supper, the prisoner was expected to wait, and was so tired he went to sleep on the floor of the best room. My Uncle Joe and Jim took a gun from the closet, and pretended to be guarding the fierce fellow. Somehow the gun was accidentally discharged, tearing a hole in the floor. The men rushed in, and the prisoner awakened in terror. When the men had gone out again, laughing, the prisoner was so much of a boy that we asked him all sorts of questions, but I cannot now recall his answers. My Uncle Joe later enlisted, and, when he came home on furlough, I recall his telling a story about shooting a rebel. Jim and I agreed we did not believe it, although we kept quiet in presence of the hero.

Another squad came through on recruiting service. One of them was a tall lieutenant named Tom Neal, and, hearing that a lodge of Knights of the Golden Circle had been organized by rebels in the neighborhood, he attended one of the meetings, to demand that the treasonable organization be disbanded.

The rebels had erected a flag pole, and our older boys had been trying to bore it down. They went at night, and bored many auger holes in it, in the hope of weakening it sufficiently to be able to push it over: they bored auger holes, instead of chopping, that the rebels in the vicinity might not be aroused. I used to go along on these midnight excursions, and they were very exciting. But when Tom Neal and members of his squad

heard of the flag pole, they rode boldly over with an ax, and chopped it down.

While Tom Neal and his men were at home there was excitement of some kind every day. Once we heard a drum beating, and thought it must be the approach of an army. But the noise was made by three new recruits, who were leaving for the front, and they came by our house to see if mother had any word to send to "Cap."

During this time Jim and I helped the War Widows: women whose husbands were in the army. I do not believe we were ever of much assistance to them, for we played on the way, and when we arrived at the War Widow's home, usually found other boys and old men there who seemed engaged in some sort of frolic, instead of serious work. I think what we ate cost more than the work we did was worth.

Word came one day that my Uncle George, my mother's brother, had been killed in battle. A mournful service was held in the church, and we all sat on the front seat. On returning from the service, Aunt Lu, my Uncle George's widow, returned with us, to remain as a member of our family.

One day, I do not remember just when, father came home. He had been incapacitated in some way. I do not believe he had been wounded, although he was ill for a time. Later I heard he did not intend going back to his company, but had bought the rebel newspaper in town, and would in future fight for Freedom through its columns.

CHAPTER IV

My life actually began at about the age of eleven, when we moved from the farm to the county seat. It was my first sight of the world: a poor enough corner of it, but wonderful after Fairview. I found unusual people and events wherever I went. E. R. Martin, the printer who taught me his trade, was the old-fashioned kind who had his bed in the office, and played a guitar. I had never before seen a musical instrument, or known there was such a thing. He also wrote verses and sketches, and, most surprising of all, these were sometimes printed in a New York weekly called "The Mercury." I think of him now as the best all-round country printer I have ever known.

Fortunately he liked the two country boys who were placed in his care, and did many things to please and improve us. He said that sometimes at night, when he played the guitar softly, with the moon streaming in at the windows, mice would come out and listen. I feared this fine gentleman had turned out a boaster, like Nate, and the other boys I had known on the farm, but once he invited us to visit him, and, greatly to our surprise, proved his statement. The occasion was a supper he gave us in the office. That night he told us one of the stories for which he was famous, and we disgraced ourselves by going to sleep in the most exciting part.

Jim and I delivered the paper to town subscribers, and when New Year came, Mr. Martin wrote a Carrier's Address, and printed it very handsomely. He told us to sell the addresses for whatever we could get: for a half dollar or quarter, if we could persuade subscribers to such extravagance, but to take a dime, or five cents, if we could do no better. I came in with pockets full of money, but it seems Jim said to his subscribers when they asked the price:

"Mr. Martin said to get a half dollar or a quarter, if I could, but to take a dime or five cents, if you won't pay more."

So most of them gave him five cents, and, when he saw my money, demanded an equal division of the total income. I argued that the money I took in was mine, and Mr. Martin decided I was right: I remember the incident specially because decisions have usually been against me. I recall a cross old fellow I annoyed to buy one of the addresses, and only accepted five cents at the end of an hour. The money he gave me was a piece of yellow paper called a "shin plaster" in that day.

Mr. Martin was the first gentleman I ever knew, and, strangely enough, my greatest admirer. Jim was a famous good boy, but Mr. Martin was partial to me, which no one had been previously. I recall that a good deal of amazement was expressed in our family when it was known that the wonderful Mr. Martin preferred me to Jim.

Indeed, the people of Bethany were kind to me, and

I got along better with them than any other member of our family. Father, a fanatical abolitionist and Methodist, soon began preaching both doctrines at the court house, and never seemed popular, as most of the Bethany people were Campbellites and Democrats. He believed sprinkling the proper form of baptism, but the Campbellites insisted on putting the converted under water. I heard this question discussed by the hour, sometimes with curses and blows.

I paid no attention to the religious and political differences of the town people, and got along better. Mother was not well, and few saw her. My brother Jim would not make up with the rebel boys: once he pulled a Barlow knife on some of them, and they were afraid of him, whereas my plan was to go everywhere, know everybody, and be friendly. Sometimes the men chased me out of their way, but half good-naturedly, and did not seem to seriously object to my presence.

Bethany was my awakening. I saw my first melodeon there, and tried to play on it so much that I was a nuisance. Finally a piano was brought to town by a bride, and I had to be chased away from that.

Mr. Martin was gentle, and taught us that side of life. A young man named Humphrey Ramer, also a printer, taught us the rougher side. Although almost a man grown, he had no use of his legs, which were shriveled, but went everywhere with the aid of crutches. Humphrey made us conform to proper rough rules, and his influence on all the boys was excellent. While we were roaming the town until late at night, our par-

ents thought we were in mischief, but we were learning the necessary rough rules of life from a capable teacher.

He once pretended he had discovered the place in the creek where the women went in swimming, and frequently, after dark, led us with great caution and mystery to the spot, but the women were never there. I know now the women had no favorite swimming hole, and did not go swimming at night or any other time, but firmly believed it then. I have often wondered why Humphrey thus made game of us, for he always pretended to be surprised when he found no women in the swimming hole to which he led us: he said someone in the party had told his secret, and usually blamed me, for I was always talking. Humphrey was studying law at night, but not doing much at it, and used to stand before us on his crutches and make speeches. From these I learned a good many useful things, for he knew more than I did. If one in his audience misbehaved, or became restless, Humphrey would correct him with one of his crutches, and proceed with his oratory.

In course of time the services of both Mr. Martin and Humphrey Ramer were dispensed with, and all the work in the printing office was done by members of our family. Aunt Lu, widow of my Uncle George, learned to set type, as father did. Jim and I had a key to the office, and slept there. Frequently we went in late at night, accompanied by other boys, and cooked eggs on paper on top of the stove. Once an objectionable

rebel boy tried to get in, and Jim drew his famous knife. E. R. Martin died in Bethany many years ago, and a monument was erected over his grave by popular subscription. I never heard of his owning a paper, and do not know of a similar compliment being paid a man who always worked as a journeyman printer.

Soon after going to town we heard of a circus, and that printers were given free tickets. When the agent of a wagon circus finally came, and we went in to get our passes, we found the editor had quarreled with him, and said he would not pollute his columns with a circus advertisement, as circuses were immoral. The editor further said he would use his influence to see that few attended.

He immediately began a terrific crusade against the coming show, with the result that when it finally arrived, the greatest crowd of people in the town's history greeted it. Many came into the office, and joked the editor because his attack on the circus had only resulted in bringing in more people than the tent would probably hold. While this merriment went on in the front office, I resolved to see the circus, whatever the consequences. Jim urged me to work all day, as we had been ordered to do, but when he could not persuade me to his own virtue, went along on the wild adventure.

We could not get in to the afternoon performance. It seemed easy to crawl under the tent, but a man caught my legs, and pulled me out, and, while he was cuffing me, I saw another man cuffing Jim, who had failed not far away. We could not borrow the necessary

money, as we were compelled to hide a good deal, knowing that father was looking for us. But at night, in desperation, we applied to a member of father's church for a loan of half a dollar each. We told him we had run off, and without his aid would get a whipping without seeing the show. Our appeal was effective, and he gave us the money, with a warning to say nothing about it to anyone. He not only loaned us the necessary money, but gave us a little more with which to buy something to eat, as we had had nothing since morning, not daring to go home. We each bought a bowl of cove oyster soup at the saloon, a thing we had been longing to do. I recall that while we had been thinking cove oyster soup, cooked over a spirit lamp at the saloon, was about the best thing to eat that could be had, we did not much care for it, once it was set before us. The saloon keeper made us pay before he began cooking, doubting we had any money.

There have been a few wonderful events in my life, and heading the list is the performance given by Miles Orton's circus in Bethany, Missouri, about 1864. Several years ago I wrote about it in a magazine, and an old circus man living in Minnesota remembered the incident; an editor of a paper refusing a circus advertisement, a thing unheard of up to that time, had become circus history. Usually they demand double price, and fifty tickets.

The only flaw in the show, to me, was a handsome boy who rode a horse, for I knew all the town girls were crazy about him. Fortunately the boy soon fell

off, and hurt himself, and did not appear again. One delight succeeded another for an hour, when a drunken man appeared, and caused a delay. We did not know him: there was only one drunkard in town, and this was another man. We concluded the stranger had been attracted with the crowd from an adjoining town.

The drunken man said he knew the clown, who was called Doctor Gilkerson. I remember that the clown, in shaking hands, gave a sudden jerk, and the drunken man tumbled over and over, greatly to the delight of everyone. Finally the clown recognized the man; it seemed they had gone to school together, a long time before, in a distant place, and talked awhile about old days, when the clown asked:

"What has become of that old Howe who used to teach the school?"

Here was the town's first show joke on a local man, and the crowd began to roar.

"Why, hadn't you heard?" the man answered. "He is running a paper here in Bethany about the size of a postage stamp, and is so good he won't print a circus advertisement."

And then the crowd went wild, in which Jim and I joined. We knew we were to get a whipping after the show, and thought we should get all the enjoyment possible.

Later the drunken man insisted on riding one of the show horses, and the clown let him try it, saying that maybe he would kill himself, and then they could carry

him out of the way. But the man did pretty well, and we were rather proud of him, until he began taking off his clothes.

I think I was never more shocked in my life, as he seemed determined to take off every stitch he had on; but he turned out to be a circus man, in tights, and about the best rider they had. Some of the other boys said they knew what was coming all the time, and I said I did, too.

After the show, we were confronted with the necessity of going home, which we did only after seeing everything packed up and started for another town. There was a side show, displaying stereopticon views of the war, trying to attract a few last pennies. I had heard that if a printer showed his composing rule, a showman would let him in free. The story was never true, but this man had probably been a printer, and was so amused at my gullibility that he let us in. The side show was nearly over, and didn't amount to much, anyway, and I think the man was making game of us. Jim hadn't his rule with him, but I assured the man that Jim was a printer, and had one; whereupon the showman seriously called on me to give my word of honor as a gentleman that Jim was also entitled to the usual courtesies. All sorts of unusual things happened that day: being called upon to give my word of honor as a gentleman made me feel that I was out in the world, and getting on rapidly.

Not long after we went into the side show some men

began taking down the tent, and soon we had to go home. When we sneaked in, father was waiting for us, as we expected.

"Well," he said, "you've been to the circus?"

I would have denied it, had there been any use, so I admitted it.

"How did you like it?"

I was too wise to say I liked it, so replied it wasn't very good, although I have never since seen a show that pleased me as much.

"Did they say anything about me?"

I replied that they had, and he wanted to know how the crowd took it. Whereupon I had an idea: I said the joke didn't go very well; that Bill Hillman, and several other leading men, went down to the ring, and told the clown and drunken man that Henry Howe was the most prominent and useful citizen of the town, and that they would not see him abused by a lot of low show people.

I laid it on pretty thick, but it seemed to please him.

"Well," he said, "hurry up to bed. We have a big day's work ahead of us to-morrow."

I sometimes regret I got that favorable start in deception, for it has never worked well with me since.

Sometime later Mabie's Menagerie came to town, and, as it was educational, father cheerfully printed its advertisements. He was also given a free ticket for Henry Howe and Family, and I still recall he took in a good many in no way connected with us, to the great indignation of the showmen.

CHAPTER V

WITHIN a year after entering the printing office at Bethany I was compelled to set two columns of brevier every day; old printers familiar with hand composition will recognize this as a fair day's work for a man. If in the evening I had failed to complete my two columns, I got a whipping, and was compelled to finish the work before going to bed.

And how sleepy and rebellious I became, with the town boys playing outside! I was always able to hear them, and frequently they wanted to get in, but Jim objected; be insisted on my getting through, and often assisted me. Once I went to sleep while resting, and he completed my task rather than disturb me. The only light I had for night work was supplied by tallow candles, and the melting grease ran down into the boxes: I was always having trouble with the big "e" box, where I usually placed two.

On the two press days of the week, Jim and I took turn about inking the forms with a hand roller we had helped to make of glue and molasses, and cast in a brass mold. Father worked the press, and was forever grumbling because we did not properly distribute the ink before rolling the forms. Mr. Martin had been very neat with his press work, but we were careless, and gave up the troublesome "frisket" which he had used.

At rare intervals we were sent to school, but worked in the morning until school time, and after school until we "knocked off for supper," as the men said in that day. On Saturday we worked full hours, from seven in the morning until six at night, with an hour off for dinner; in all my days as a journeyman, that was the rule. In the winter months, we always started preparations for work before daylight, and finished by lamplight. The seven- or eight-hour day, with agitation for further reduction, is comparatively recent. After I became a big boy and went away to work, I recall the luxury of a corn-cob fire to dress by in the dark winter mornings. With paper and cobs a warm room could be had very quickly, and cobs were very plentiful and cheap; sometimes we burned corn, which sold at ten cents a bushel.

Bethany was supplied with mail by stage from Chillicothe, on the railroad, and twice a week, at night, we gathered in the lower hall at the court house for the distribution of mail containing war news. Letters and papers were handed out to those in waiting, and these were often read aloud. We thus heard of the battles of that time, and of the assassination of Lincoln. Somehow I remember we were specially interested in the battle at Pittsburg Landing, as the company formed at Fairview took part there. I also recall the oration delivered at the Campbellite church to commemorate the assassination of Lincoln. Jonas J. Clark, judge of the district court, happened to be in town, and was the speaker: I can only remember of his effort

that he began: "Earth to earth, and dust to dust," and that it was a very impressive occasion.

One night, in the court house, some rebel boys annoyed Jim, and he cut one of them slightly with his famous Barlow knife, for which he was summoned before the grand jury, but nothing further came of the incident.

I remember a railroad excitement, when we all went to a certain place, and the first shovel full of dirt was thrown; but when the railroad came, many years after my time, it did not go anywhere near the place we dedicated. Father started a coal mine in the same way, and I assisted in driving around and around the horse —our old buggy horse—which was attached to the hoisting apparatus. I can recall but one miner, and he boarded at our house. I think both the railroad and the coal mine were newspaper enterprises father thought up to "keep something going on," for on the railroad only one shovel full of dirt was thrown, and the coal shaft was abandoned after forty feet.

Finally we sold the newspaper, and engaged in store keeping, occupying the building where we had operated the printing office. Sometimes I worked in the store, and sometimes for the new owner of the newspaper. This man was from Iowa, a state I had great respect for, its citizens having saved father from going to jail, and have always remembered a trifling incident from that day. Once the owner's wife called at the office, and, after a brief conversation with her husband, departed.

"Do you know what she wanted?" the proprietor asked.

I did not, of course, and said so.

"She wants you to come to dinner," he replied.

The attention was very agreeable, father had so poor an opinion of me. He collected my wages, and while I do not remember what they were, I know I rarely had a penny of my own. But I seem to have somehow accumulated five dollars: I recall a woman robbing me of it by offering to teach me the art of painting in oil. She assisted me in producing one picture: a "flower piece," she called it. Not long ago I went back to Bethany to speak at an old settlers' reunion, and found my picture still preserved by mischievous persons. It is considered the "best joke" in the town's history, it is so atrocious. So "agents" seem to have begun on me early, and I have never been able to resist them; now they ring my door bell, call me "Mr. Horn," and say of course everybody in the world knows about me. I suppose I earned that five dollars by running errands; I used to pick wild blackberries all day Sunday, and sell them to the neighbors. Usually mother made me a blackberry cobbler. Once Sarah Jane "told on me" because I would not give her a piece, and I received the usual whipping.

At another time I went into the country and worked on a farm. I can only recall of this experience that the farmer had a daughter named Viola, about fourteen years old, who gave me my first impression that there is something finer and better about women. There

was a lazy boy in the family called Robert, and his sister was always gently managing him, to prevent collisions with his father. How Robert and I hated to get up in the morning! But Viola managed us so adroitly and kindly that I have never forgotten her. Once when a rain storm came up suddenly I recall her busily collecting in her apron a lot of little chickens that had been almost drowned, and reviving them in the oven of the cook stove. Every one in the family seemed to worship her. I have not seen or heard of her since, but still revere her memory.

I have long had a feeling that my recollections of father may be unfair: that I can have no dependable opinion now as to what sort of man he was more than sixty years ago. When I went with him on the early preaching trips, I fell asleep as soon as he began to talk, and slept through the sermons and the shouting. When ready for my assistance, he aroused me, so I am not now able to rate him fairly as a preacher. As my relations with him as a child were not pleasant, possibly I do not judge him with full justice in other respects. If he could tell his side of the story how would I fare? I often wonder.

I was much interested in a letter lately received from J. W. Johnson, now in his eighty-seventh year, who knew father in the Fairview days. Writing from Olathe, Kansas, Mr. Johnson says:

"I often attended the camp meetings on Sugar creek. Your father was a great evangelist and singer, and for that reason attracted very large gatherings."

Mr. Johnson, of whom I have no knowledge save this letter, clerked in a store at Bancroft, a small "trading point" where the Fairview people often went. In the latter days of the Sugar creek meetings, Mr. Johnson must have been in his twenty-third year. I asked Mr. Johnson for further information, but he did not answer my letter, except to say he would think over the old days, and try and oblige me later.

My impression has always been that father was a popular man while living in Fairview, but did not get along well with the people at Bethany, because he was an abolitionist and Methodist, both unpopular doctrines in town. It is probably true he was the largest and most successful farmer in the Fairview neighborhood, and that he built the church in which he later preached without pay for his services, but beyond this my recollections of him may not be accurate. I never had affection for him, but a good deal of respect, as he was very capable, and a leader. If I do him injustice in considering him long after his death, my own sons may avenge him.

CHAPTER VI

My most vivid recollection of Bethany is an occurrence at our house one evening after supper: a family council called by father, although I had not heard of it until it began in our front room. Father said there had been talk about him, and that it came from the family; therefore he wanted to inquire into it. Sarah Jane, who had lately become a school teacher, was present, and I thought he particularly referred to her. She promptly accepted the challenge, and was the only one who fought back.

The talk, it developed, referred to father and Aunt Lu. I had always thought she rather brightened our house, and helped the family, as she was capable, good looking and agreeable. I had observed she was with father a good deal, but did not think it unusual, as she was related to us. Occasionally he arranged a Methodist celebration, and he and Aunt Lu sang together: after we moved to town, and Aunt Lu came, he had given up taking me with him on his trips, because of my voice. Once he had a parade, and as the town had no band, the music was made by father and Aunt Lu marching in front, singing out of the same book. I remember thinking at the time that the town people were laughing, but otherwise the incident did not attract my attention. Frequently father went back to his old appointments at Fairview, and Aunt Lu went along,

but he was going on a religious mission, and I thought nothing of it.

It seems others did: Sarah Jane, for one, for she boldly defied him, and said things I thought would cause the heavens to fall. One charge she made was that he could not meet women without acting ridiculously, and embarrassing them. I had noticed this a little in the country, specially remembering an occasion when he had money to pay the school teacher, who was boarding at our house, and he said he would turn the money over if she would kiss him. Sarah Jane remembered this incident, also, and referred to it that night, in addition to many others.

This greatly angered father, and he and Sarah Jane "had it hot and heavy," as we used to say. He said she had always been an impudent, unmanageable child, and that if she didn't change her ways, he would "take it out of her," even if she was grown, and a school teacher. Sarah Jane defied him to touch her, and said she would call the neighbors if he attacked her. I had never liked Sarah Jane, and members of the family were always talking of how we did not get along in anything, but that night I thought she was in the right: I think I never admitted as much before or since, for we cordially disliked each other, and never recovered from it: long after we were grown, we did not "speak" when we met by accident.

Mother sat quietly in her chair, the most perfect picture of woe I had ever seen. I began to realize her unhappiness that night, but had more appreciation of

it after growing up. Of the pale, tired, unhappy women I knew in my childhood, none could compare with my own mother.

Presently father walked angrily out of the house, and we all sat in silence. Sarah Jane soon went over to stay all night with a neighbor girl, and returned to her school next day. Mother went to bed, as did Aunt Lu, and Jim and I went up town, where we soon encountered father, arguing angrily with a man named McCurry, a member of his church. Somehow I thought father had appealed to McCurry for sympathy, and that McCurry had said that since the subject was brought up, he believed father had acted unwisely about Aunt Lu. This was entirely conjecture, but I have always had that notion.

A day or two later it was announced I was to take mother for a visit to her parents, who had moved to a county to the south. I had never been there, and the journey was a considerable one. I was to drive the family horse to a buggy, and we would be compelled to spend a night on the way.

That trip is another incident very vivid in my memory now. I had not before been given so much responsibility, and visions of approaching manhood began appearing in my mind for the first time. Mother was as helpless as a child, and I was compelled to inquire the way through a new country. When it was time to eat the lunch we had brought along, I found a suitable place: one where there was water for the horse, and shade for us. Before this trip I had been directed

and led in everything; here I was in authority. While I was getting out the feed for the horse, mother held him, and somehow the lines became twisted, and mother hurt her hand so much that she cried out with pain. She had been so quiet all day, and her burdens were so great that this caused me to cry, too, and taking the horse, I whipped him, still blubbering, and calling him an old fool. I had been whipped heretofore: now I was whipping and correcting. I think this was the happiest day I ever spent with my mother, and constantly showed her attention and affection, which she seemed to appreciate, although very sad. She had scarcely spoken during the morning, which caused me to be as attentive to her as I could. I had always loved her, and now I thought was the time to show it.

I had been told to find the home of Joel Fair for the night. He had once lived in our neighborhood in the country, and we knew him well. Indeed, he was one of the few I remember who had accompanied us on the trip from Indiana. The day we started there was difficulty with the loose horses and cattle, and our first camp was only a few miles away, in Joel Fair's pasture. He came to inquire where we were going, and, being informed, concluded to accompany us; when we moved on next morning, he was one of the party. What disposition he made of his farm I never knew.

To this day I am grateful to Joel Fair and members of his family for the welcome they gave us. We were now nearing the end of our journey, and they

gave us news of grandmother and her family. During the evening, thinking they would remark the quietness of mother, and thus get a suggestion of our family trouble, I tried to do the talking for both of us. I think I talked enough that night for our entire family, if not for the town of Bethany. And my talk went pretty well. We were town people, and the Fairs rather looked up to us, I thought, on that account. Probably they didn't, but town people always have that notion when in the country.

I was always so fond of the girls that I wonder it did not occur to me I was much like father. There was a girl in the Fair family named Anna, of about my age. I was violently in love with her in five minutes, and "acting smart" for her benefit. There wasn't a girl in town better looking than Anna Fair, and I took up the entire evening acting and talking foolish for her benefit. The Fairs were also Methodists, although rather lukewarm ones, and I amused them by making fun of the Campbellites in town, and didn't hesitate to cheat; the specialties I had performed in the country, mocking Methodists, I attributed to the Campbellites in Bethany, and attracted roars of applause. Even mother was amused a little. When I began noticing they were all sleepy, I redoubled my efforts, but was finally compelled to reluctantly go to bed: Anna Fair, the adorable, had gone to sleep in her chair.

It was fine to be a leader, and respected, and I enjoyed it. I tarried as long as possible next morning,

knowing my reign would close soon after noon, when we arrived at grandmother's, for she had no sort of respect for my wit or presence.

Mother was rather more cheerful as we drove along that morning, but still very quiet. When we arrived at grandmother's, and went into the house, grandmother looked at her daughter in a frightened way, and said:

"Elizabeth, what is the matter?"

Mother did not reply, further than to answer "Nothing," and break into tears.

My Uncle Nate, only eight months older than I, was there, and we did not speak to each other at first, although we exchanged admiring glances. He went with me to the stable to put up and feed the horse, and while there he hit me a resounding whack on the back. Then I hit him, and we felt natural, and began to enjoy ourselves.

Grandfather Irwin was away. I heard he was thinking of moving again, as he was always doing, and had gone somewhere to look at a piece of land he had been offered in trade. Whenever Nate and I went into the house, I noted that grandmother and mother were seated in rocking chairs, close together, as though they had been talking very earnestly; and I believed I knew what their conversation was about. If Nate and I remained too long, grandmother would say:

"You boys go out and play."

My uncle Joe had married, and was living in the vicinity. Frequently Nate and I went to see him and while we got along with Uncle Joe, Aunt Mary, his

wife, did not care for us. If we hung around hoping to be invited to dinner, Aunt Mary simply would not do it, and we returned to grandmother's, where there was always plenty for us, and welcome.

When we left for home, grandmother said to mother: "I'll be up soon."

She came a week later, and while I did not hear the talk she had with father, I recall that after she went home, he hated her.

CHAPTER VII

One morning there appeared in our yard in Bethany a new covered wagon, and matched pair of young horses. The harness was new, and there were conveniences in the wagon for camping out: a bed in the back, a small stove in front, and lockers under the bed. My curiosity was aroused, but could learn nothing about it, further than the wagon was ours. Never in my life had I dared ask father about anything, and at this time he was more unapproachable than ever. He was also very busy, as if settling his affairs, and it occurred to me he might be thinking of leaving Bethany. This impression was so strong in my mind that I told some of my companions that I might soon be going away.

Another morning, father and the wagon had disappeared, and mother was sick in bed, with the neighbor women paying us all a good deal of attention. I was several weeks finding out the details, but in time came to know that father had been "churched" at Fairview, and turned out in disgrace, because of his association with Aunt Lu, who was no longer at our house: we heard she was visiting at the home of a relative we did not know, in another part of the country.

Mother knew about the church trial, and much more. From Aunt Sarah, who had lately been at our house a good deal, and now seemed to be staying permanently,

I learned that the night he went away, father asked mother to forgive him, saying he was in great trouble, and doing the best he could. Aunt Sarah said that for the first time in his life, he broke down. He wept over the younger children as they slept in their beds, and seemed as wretched as a man could be. I was out of the house that night, and many of the details came to me long after.

He had arranged for our support, and we could write him by applying to a lawyer who had long been his special friend. In course of time letters from him began arriving, but we did not know where he was.

Aunt Sarah was a younger sister of mother, and we all loved her so much, and she was so useful, that we actually seemed to get along better than we did when father and Aunt Lu were there. With father gone, I had nothing to do, unless I found tasks, and this I was slow in doing. I loved mother and Aunt Sarah, but we always impose on those we love and are not afraid of, so I became another family problem. My half brother Jim had gone to Gallatin to work on the *North Missourian*, and being appealed to, found a place for me. At the time I was fifteen years old, and able to do a man's work as a type-setter. My compensation was to be five dollars a week and board. They gave me a paper to carry with me, signed by mother, saying I was at liberty to keep my wages.

I went on the stage, and there was one other passenger, a traveling man, who talked entertainingly. I recall his saying many things of a private nature I

had never heard of before. I became slightly ill because of an attack of an old complaint I had long been subject to; it was something like ague, of which the family seemed to have a taint from Indiana, and I recall with gratitude now that it gradually wore off as I advanced in age, finally disappearing entirely. I had it last in India, more than twenty years ago. The passenger and stage driver were much concerned about my illness, and stopped at a farm house on the way, to get something they thought would help me.

The printing office at Gallatin was in the court house, a custom in pioneer days. One of the proprietors was named Kost, a married man with a considerable family of young children, and he was nearly always disturbed because some of them were ailing; it seems to me he never gave as much attention to the paper as did Day, his bachelor partner, because of his family duties. I think Kost was the stronger man of the two, but certainly not the more agreeable; he seemed to have twice as many troubles as Day, because he was married.

It was first arranged that I should board at Kost's house, as Jim did, but I was soon sent away: Mrs. Kost, whom I greatly admired, said I was too noisy. Mrs. Kost was the most perfect example of a lady I had ever seen, and I did my best to meet her favor. No one can ever know how humiliated I was because I was not satisfactory, although doing my best. Jim remained, as Mrs. Kost said his presence around the house was helpful. Mrs. Kost's parents, and a considerable number of her brothers and sisters, lived in Gallatin. They were

also fine people, and admired Jim, which did not surprise me: I always said he was the best boy I ever knew, and was not envious.

I had never lived away from home before, and, although my home had not been a happy one, missed it sadly. One of my most vivid recollections is of the homesickness that assailed me: I thought I would never get over it, and must run away and return to Bethany.

A Mrs. Ewing ran the boarding house to which I was sent, and I somehow knew she was a lady in reduced circumstances. And she was so much of a lady that I came to believe she almost equaled Mrs. Kost, who objected to my noise. I glowed with pride when I heard Mrs. Ewing liked me, and the better she liked me, the more I tried to deserve her good will. Mrs. Ewing had an older sister called Miss Hattie who assisted about the place, and I got along well with her, too, as I did with two children in the family, and with the five or six boarders.

Father had always said that temptation assailed those who went out in the world, but here I was out in the world, and everyone kind to me: I was better cared for at Mrs. Ewing's than I had been at home. One of the boarders was a young lawyer named McDougall, who afterwards became distinguished. I can remember none of the others except a man named Sankey, a saddler, and a milliner called Miss Belle.

Kost & Day were establishing another newspaper in an adjoining town, and Jim was going there as soon as he had trained me to take his place, much to the regret

of Mrs. Kost and her aristocratic relatives. Two or three of her brothers later located in Kansas City, and I heard of them many years later as fine and successful men.

I suppose it was because I was older, and able to observe more, but my education advanced more rapidly at Gallatin. There were more notable men there than at any other place I had lived: among them a war hero who had killed Bill Anderson, a guerilla leader, in a fair fight, and defeated his band.

After Jim went away, another hand in the office was a grown man with whiskers, named Charley Post. I was the better printer of the two, and soon dominated him. He had worked in a good many places, and I learned much from him. I do not recall a bad habit he had, but I think he was the first grown man I had ever known who was not smart enough. Charley had a brother who was prominent, as prominence went in that day, and I liked to hear him talk about his noted relative. He exaggerated, no doubt, but it was all schooling; there were plenty of people in the world who lived as well as Charley Post said his brother did, so his bragging was really information.

Charley Post and I were frequently asked to take orders on stores for our pay on Saturdays: in that early time the newspaper business was not what it is to-day. My employers for a good many years were not experienced publishers and printers. Father was a preacher and farmer; Kost was a lawyer, and Day a soldier lately returned from the Civil war with nothing

to do, so he drifted into a newspaper office, probably with a view of later being elected county clerk or treasurer. Both at Gallatin and Maysville, the printing offices had free rent in the court house; editors were regarded somewhat as mendicants, instead of the powerful aristocrats they are to-day; the old joke about the editor living out of his paste pot probably originated about that time. The main source of income was from "legal notices": official publications concerning land and court proceedings, and which carried what was then thought to be a high rate: I recall farmers grumbling viciously about the charges they were compelled to pay for such services. A tax sale notice occupying a page or more, and running four weeks, made the editor's fortune. In 1929 a "legal notice" or tax list is rarely seen in the big newspapers, as the legal rate, once thought robbery, is much below the rate paid by everybody.

If we put in type an advertisement announcing the arrival of an extensive stock of spring and summer merchandise, it ran until we reluctantly changed it to announce the arrival of an equally extensive assortment of fall and winter goods; and when we made the change we found the type gummed together, and were compelled to soak the advertisement in lye to get it apart. Merchants advertised as a charity, and lawyers and doctors ran a small card for the same reason. When I look over the newspaper field to-day I almost feel I was never a publisher or printer at all, but a "blacksmith," a charge frequently made against me in an

early day; "blacksmith" being a word used by printers to denote a slouch.

As I worked in the printing office, I soon noted there was a jail in one corner of the court house yard, and that a girl lived in the keeper's family. She was certainly twenty-two years old, while I was only fifteen, but in a month I was engaged to her. Her name was Libby Sayles, and her sister the wife of the keeper of the jail. This keeper also had charge of a farm owned by the sheriff; Libby's sister was the real jailer, although I often thought the sheriff, a burly sort of fellow, wondered why I was hanging around so much. I also knew the prisoners, and carried newspapers to them every day.

Libby brought the engagement about somehow; I know I never proposed, and realized that I would be compelled to get out of it. In consideration of her age, probably I had told her I was older than I really was; I do not remember, but she believed my purpose in hanging around her was marriage, and helped me along. She soon expected an engagement ring, and said it would cost nine dollars, a perfectly impossible sum to me, as I was always heavily in debt, mainly at the livery stable, for I frequently took Libby out riding. I soon arranged for a cut rate with the livery man, if I would put away the horse on coming in late at night, but in spite of this my earnings did not anywhere near meet my necessities. In making final settlement with the livery man, we had a row, as he said in giving me a cut rate, he had contemplated cash, and could not

accept the "order" I offered him from Kost & Day against the yearly card he ran in the paper for fifty cents a month.

Libby assisted her sister in caring for the prisoners, and was a good cook. In course of time I took half my meals at the jail, and spent all my idle time there. Libby's sister seemed to approve of our "going together," and they made me so comfortable that I wonder I didn't stay there all the time. I do not know how the jailer felt about it, but he at least said nothing, and was finally friendly with me. The friction with the sheriff soon disappeared also; I think he heard about the foolish affair from the men around town, was amused, and let me alone.

Libby had a girl friend she called Maidie. I never knew who she was, except that she was very nice. Maybe she worked in some family in town; I do not remember, but nearly every evening she was at the jail, and usually went riding with us. In time I came to think a lot of her. When I could get out of calling on Libby in the evening, I called on Maidie. And that wasn't all of it: I was in love with the milliner named Miss Belle, who boarded at Mrs. Ewing's. Miss Belle was certainly thirty, and Miss Hattie, with whom I tried to get up another flirtation, was probably forty. I do not know how old the jailer's wife was, but I greatly admired her, too. The amount of affection in a young man of fifteen is colossal. But I was engaged to Libby, and she seemed to be content, except that I was always putting her off about the engagement ring.

I think I told her my family was rich, which was fiction, and that when I came into my money I would buy her a ring, and pay at least twelve dollars for it, instead of nine, which was the price of the one she and Maidie had looked at and decided was satisfactory.

Because of sitting up half of every night with women, I was always sleepy, and neglected my work. Mr. Day finally spoke to me about it, as he realized how absurdly I was acting, but I knew of no way out of it. I suggested that he speak to Libby about it, but although Mr. Day had been a gallant soldier, and had "veteranized," he was afraid of women. I also heard that Mrs. Ewing, and McDougall and Sankey, talked about the way I was carrying on. Their suggestion was that I quit going to the jail so much, but I feared that if I did, Libby would kill herself; Libby loved me so dearly that I could not see how she could ever get over it. Besides, I thoroughly enjoyed the affair, Libby was so agreeable. So were Maidie, Miss Belle, the jailer's wife, and Miss Hattie. I often noted that Libby and Maidie talked bitterly about the men, which rendered me rather uncomfortable, for what they said applied rather forcefully to me, too; when a woman criticizes men, she means some of it for the man she is talking to.

Of the four women I was in love with in Gallatin, I believe I thought most of Libby, because she never bothered me with jealousy. She must have known how fickle I was, but did not seem to mind it. I thank her memory with a whole heart, for the women I have

known since have not been so considerate. Whether Libby had had other affairs, and knew what to expect of men, I do not know, but I do know she was the only woman I ever knew who was not disposed to jealousy. Both Miss Belle and Miss Hattie were jealous in a motherly sort of way, and Maidie was at times violent, but Libby thought everything I did was all right. It pleased me also that I was able to easily deceive her about the engagement ring. However grossly I lied, she accepted what I said. A man likes that in a woman. And while my friends were trying to save me, I was getting in deeper every day. I rather liked their attempts to save me, too; I believe all men do. Drunkards must enjoy the efforts of their neighbors to reform them, as the wicked certainly enjoy the efforts of the pious to get them into the church.

Had I remained in Gallatin longer, Libby might have persuaded me to marry her, for I have never been able to resist women, and nothing saved me from a ridiculous marriage except that I was compelled to go to another town where Kost & Day owned a paper. Jim's assistant had quit, and it became necessary for me to take his place.

I vowed constancy to Libby, Maidie, Miss Belle, and Miss Hattie, and departed in a buggy with Mr. Day. In the new town, I was as homesick for Libby as I had been for mother when I first arrived in Gallatin; what would have become of me I do not know, had I not soon formed another attachment. In a week I was in love with a sister of the proprietor's wife at the hotel where I

boarded. This new girl could play the piano, and I became a great nuisance around the hotel singing with her.

My love affair at Maysville never prospered very well. The sister of the proprietor's wife had a lot of admirers, and I have never been able to take much interest in a divided affection: there are so many hearts that I have always believed there should be a whole one for everybody. The new girl was tired of the talk that went so well with Libby, Maidie, Miss Belle and Miss Hattie, and in a little while I thought I would look further before permanently placing my affections again: she had a careless way when with me that soon made me indifferent, too. I heard recently that she finally married a man whose name I see frequently in the newspapers, but she never seems to have done as much with her music as she expected to.

I think Libby knew that when I left Gallatin, it was the last of me, knowing my affectionate nature; I am obliged to her memory because she made the separation easy. Possibly she had had lovers before, and knew, but I am certain they were as harmless as she found me; for how that girl could take care of herself!

CHAPTER VIII

While in Maysville I was probably near sixteen years old, and believed I was becoming quite familiar with life. I lived at a regular hotel, which had a comfortable office, a piano in the parlor, and traveling men at the table every day telling new jokes. One of these was "on" me.

"This is the hotel," one of them said at dinner, "where you get board (bored) for nothing."

It was a reference to my persistent singing and piano playing in the parlor, and the reproof almost took my breath away. I have not yet fully recovered from that terrible thrust.

A few years ago I met in South Africa a woman who, as a girl, lived in Maysville, and said I had serenaded her, assisted by a man who played a guitar. He was an Englishman, a civil-engineer of twice my age I had picked up acquaintance with, as I did with many others. I became rather noted in Maysville because at the parties I gave imitations of the old revival services in Fairview: not impiously, but as recollections of a frontier day long past. When I was sixteen, the old days in Fairview seemed almost as remote and unusual to me as they do now at seventy-five: a long time ago may be six years, sixty or six hundred.

Mr. Day, of Kost & Day, for whom I worked in Gal-

latin, had charge of the Maysville paper, and I have the kindliest recollection of him, he was so steadily the friend of a noisy, active, mischievous boy in whom I hope there was not much real harm. I had become a fast type setter, and Mr. Day had a way of "managing" me; mainly with a little praise and much kindness, and I could do in a day almost as much work as some of the lazy printers I had supplanted did in two. If I heard of an item, I put it in type without going to the trouble of writing it out. I was encouraged in this, and my first attempts at writing were at Maysville.

I don't know how long I had been there when I received a letter saying mother was not very well, and suggesting that I come home. Mr. Day was sorry to see me go, but found someone to take my place, and I arranged to go to St. Joe in a freight wagon, and thence to Bethany in the same manner. A man boarded at the hotel who made regular trips to St. Joe with an empty wagon, and returned with freight for the merchants. I think this plan appealed to me because we should see a railroad on the way. I had never seen a railroad, and the wagon driver, an old traveler who saw one every week, said he was always greatly impressed with the sight.

I remember we were traveling at night, and the driver had stopped to water the horses, when he said the railroad was only a few hundred yards away, so I walked ahead alone to see it, as I did not know just how much I might be moved in the mighty presence. Soon I came to it, and it was as wonderful as I had

imagined. The rails, the grade, the ties: how had men been found to do all this work! Where did so much material come from! I did not see a train until next day, when we arrived in St. Joe, where I also saw a river: the Missouri, and I recall that the driver said it looked pretty rough to him: that he would not care to go out on it in a boat, unless the boat were a large one in capable hands.

There was a man hauling freight from St. Joe to Bethany, also, and I at once looked him up to arrange for returning home. He handed me a letter from Aunt Sarah saying mother was better, so I determined to find employment in St. Joe, as wages were much higher than in the smaller towns.

In the old days of hand type setting, in all the larger towns there were extra men called "subs," or substitutes. A regular hand could lay off at any time, by putting on a "sub," and these were always abundant. I often think this would be a good idea now in all trades: as an employer I was greatly annoyed by being short-handed, employes laying off frequently without good excuse. Why not "subs" in all shops and offices to relieve employers of this trouble? In my day as a journeyman, employers imposed on workmen: now I see frequent cases of employers being imposed on by workmen.

I soon became a "sub" on the *Herald*, a daily paper, the first on which I had ever worked. All I had to do was to follow copy; "if it went out the window," the printers said, so I got along easily. Usually I worked

three or four days a week, but long hours, as the paper appeared in the morning. Being quite rapid, I could make a considerable sum at piece work from three in the afternoon until two in the morning.

One thing I immediately noticed at St. Joe I have noticed all my life: poor people get along better in little towns that in large ones. In the little towns I had known everybody, and lived about as well as anybody, but in St. Joe I was compelled to go to a printer's boarding house, an unsatisfactory place not at all like the comfortable places I had lived in Gallatin and Maysville. Besides, in St. Joe I could know the principal people only by sight, whereas in Maysville I knew the merchants, bankers, county officials, and the judge of the court to speak to, and attended picnics where the best families were represented.

I complained about this one day to a young fellow who worked beside me, and he said he believed his mother could accommodate me. This was arranged, to my great advantage, for I had never seen an equally wonderful home. The mother and son were the only members of the family, and they lived in a large house. The mother had been lately widowed, to find her affairs in a tangle, and I heard they would finally be compelled to move elsewhere. I had a room to myself, and the furniture was of an expensive kind I had never seen before: indeed, not imagined, for I did not know there were any such furnishings for a house. For all this magnificence, I paid three dollars and a half a week. I believed my hostess was as fine a lady as Mrs.

Kost, in Gallatin, and it has always been a source of much satisfaction to me that she did not send me away because I was so noisy as to disturb her peace.

If the son and I happened to be off the same night, we took the mother to entertainments, and she was so cultured and gentle as to be a revelation to me: my first realization of the heights women often reach. I saw my first play in St. Joe, and can remember the name of it: "The Pearl of Savoy," but cannot remember, I am ashamed to say, the name of the mother and son I had invited to accompany me. My short residence in this St. Joe family did me more good than any other one thing that has happened in my life, because it came at the exact time when I needed most the lessons I learned there.

Across from the office where I worked was a music store, and as I "threw in my case" in the afternoons, I had a good course in music; the man in charge, and who exhibited pianos, was a brilliant player, I thought, and I came to know him well. He had a friend who was almost a good violinist, and how I reveled in these two! So far as I know, the violinist played entirely by ear, and in a piece he called "Willie, We Have Missed You," achieved a sweetness I have never met with since in music. Perhaps if I should hear the man play now, I would pick flaws, but one day in setting type, I had to go to the italic case for the word *virtuoso*, new to me, and applied it to him. I admired the man with such enthusiasm that, when I left St. Joe, he came under my window late at night, and I was awakened hearing him

play "Willie, We Have Missed You." I have lived fifty years within twenty miles of St. Joe, and have many acquaintances there, but have never been able to make any of them recall that violinist, or the widow and her son who were so kind to me.

Having received a letter from Aunt Sarah saying I had better come home, I soon started with the freight hauler I knew. We camped out two nights on the way, and the man cooked our meals over an open fire I built; a novel and enjoyable experience I recall now as vividly as though it had happened yesterday. How soundly I slept in my clothes on a blanket under the wagon! How I enjoyed the rough meals, and the sights on the way as we moved slowly through the country! I slept a good deal on top of the load, through the day, and the driver tied me on with ropes, to prevent my rolling off at the rough places.

This man was of rather superior type: he had married one of the prettiest and best-connected girls in Bethany, although he had arrived in the town as a floater. He later became one of the best men in the community, aided by his fortunate marriage. I have always believed men in big towns should marry in the small country places, the girls are so nice.

Mother's faltering step and pale face startled me when first I met her, but she was better within a few days, and seemed to enjoy my visit. I spent more time with her than I had ever done before, and as Aunt Sarah made much of me, too, I keenly enjoyed what proved to be my last days in Bethany.

At St. Joe I had discovered that the fine woman at whose home I lived was a Democrat, and admired her so much that I thought all really refined people must be of that political persuasion; so I pretended I was a Democrat, although I did not know the difference between a Democrat and a Republican, and there isn't much, although there was more then than now.

So I rather made a specialty of the Democrat children in Bethany. Somewhere I had acquired a sword cane: a ridiculous affair that had hidden in the stick a dagger so dull it couldn't hurt anyone. One day there was a Democrat rally, and while I was around with the Democrats, and pretending to be one, a Republican boy called me out, and said he intended to make me eat that dagger, cane and all. But we had formerly been friends, and I was able to make up with him. I was tired of the cane, anyway, and traded it to him for some trifling new thing he had I longed for.

My particular friend in the town was a Democrat boy named John Devers, son of the old sheriff who had arrested father at Fairview, charged with inciting slaves to rebellion, an incident closed by the war. One day I was with John Devers, and somehow we procured a bottle of whisky, and became sick. While we were in a stable, trying to recover, John's father appeared, and took him home. The people believed I had acquired worldly habits at Gallatin and Maysville, and was trying to lead John astray, but I had never been in a saloon except at Bethany, and went in that one to buy a bowl of cove oyster soup. I had never tasted whisky

until that day, and John had as much to do with the foolish prank as I had, but they all believed I was an abandoned wretch, which humiliates me to this day, as I was very fond of John's father and mother, and the Bethany people. Why did we engage in the folly? I have no idea, except that there is a streak of it in everyone, whether they live in Bethany or Mandalay. I think the humiliation did me good, for I have been a tiresome preacher of temperance ever since. I have never been able to see any sense in intoxicants; if I want to play the fool, I can find a dozen things more promising than whisky.

My old friend Humphrey Ramer, a much older printer than I, dared me to run a race with him, and almost won the victory by making fun of me, at which he was a master. We set type side by side, and he could work and talk, which I could not do. All the time he was rushing, and doing his best, he was making remarks about me to make me mad.

"Look at his clothes," he said. "He thinks they are pretty, but he has only one suit, and he slept in that on his way here in a wagon. Most respectable people travel in a stage."

Or, "Watch me take the conceit out of the young puppy. Bud Behee made him eat his sword cane, and I'll show him up as a blacksmith" (a word used by printers to designate a slouch).

We set the same copy, and had to correct it, and I beat him only by a shade, I pied so many lines owing to the other boys standing around and laughing at Hum-

phrey's wit. I was faster than he, but I have never been able to show off when I want to. Later I made up with him, when he confessed he abused me only to "rattle" me, and didn't mean anything: I was staying all night at his house when I was hurriedly sent for. Mother was worse, the word was, and she died within an hour after they found me.

Grandmother didn't get there until a week after the funeral, she lived so far away, and communication was so slow, and, the night she came, was sleeping in the front room with Sarah Jane; a bed had been put up there during mother's illness, and had not been taken down. I had not gone to bed, and when there was a knock at the door, went to see who was calling.

It was father, whom we had not seen since he disappeared in the new wagon drawn by the young matched horses.

It was a crisp night, and there had been a fire in the room where grandmother and Sarah Jane were sleeping. I took father in there, and stirred the fire, not knowing what else to do. I noticed he wore a leather belt, and that there was a bulge at his hip indicating a pistol. He had come back to settle his affairs, and came armed, knowing the people were unfriendly.

Grandmother and Sarah Jane were aroused, and soon Sarah Jane attacked him as sharply and venomously as the evening when mother and Aunt Lu, and all the children, were present. Father replied heatedly, but always at a disadvantage, for he was in the wrong. Frequently grandmother would raise her head, and say

something bitter, and father would reply to that. I recall father saying that night that Sarah Jane was not "a child of his loins," and had always been impudent and unmanageable. It was the strangest war of words I had ever heard, both sides holding their ground until near midnight. Then father went away, saying he would return at eight in the morning, when he expected both to be out of the house. Later I learned he slept at the home of his lawyer, as he did not know how he would be received at the hotel. Both grandmother and Sarah Jane went to a neighbor's before he appeared next day, and neither saw him again. He remained two weeks settling up his affairs, and, at the end of that time, said he would take us all with him. Jim was away at work, I have forgotten where, and father said if I wanted to go with him, he could find me a place.

We started in the wagon which made regular trips to St. Joe for freight, the driver having put in chairs for our accommodation: father and I, a younger sister, and three younger brothers. As we passed down the street, many of the neighbor women stood in their doorways and yards, occasionally wiping their eyes with their aprons. Some of them thought father might be taking the children away to dispose of them villainously, but I knew he was glad to be reunited with them. He had softened considerably since the day when I was little, owing to his suffering. We stopped one night at a hotel so primitive that in the morning we all went

out to the well to wash our faces. It was kept by two old people so feeble we all helped them.

Arrived at St. Joe, he took us aboard a steamboat, and for a week we ran up stream when we could, as the river was low. At the end of the seventh day father began collecting his effects, and we knew we were soon to land. At eleven o'clock that night we went ashore at a place where there was not so much as a house, although the men discharged freight. Then we started off through the darkness, father and I carrying the younger children, or pushing them ahead of us. Presently we came to a lonely house, father produced a key, and we entered. A match could not be found readily, and during the delay some of the children cried timidly, they were so homesick. When the flitting rays of a light appeared, and I glanced about, I had a quick impression that my only sister, fourteen years old, was pleased that we found the house unoccupied. Soon she was active in attending the sleepy children, and father said:

"Well, Minnie, you are now the mother of the family."

I had long marveled at Aunt Sarah's statement that he had broken down on leaving home with the new wagon and team of young horses; I could not believe it of so grim a man, but this night he was surely on the point of crying in presence of all of us.

CHAPTER IX

The place at which we landed turned out to be three miles below Council Bluffs, Iowa. The Union Pacific, the first railroad across the continent, was building, and everyone who amounted to much appeared there or at Omaha, just across the river, enroute to the West, which had already attracted the adventurous. I hadn't been there long before I saw Schuyler Colfax, a vice-president, and heard him speak. The tremendous sentiments he uttered were new to me then, although I have grown somewhat tired of them since. Not long after hearing Mr. Colfax speak, I saw a man hanged. When brought to the gallows, he screamed with terror, and kept saying he was afraid to die: he fell on his knees before the officers, and begged pitifully for mercy. I cried with him, as did others, and wanted to engage in an attempt at rescue, for the prisoner was pale and sickly, and quite young. But they forcibly hanged him, and his screaming and struggling only ended when his neck was broken. It was a terrible scene, but I saw worse ones as I walked home that night alone, through the darkness; every noise was a scream, and every shadow a scaffold.

I soon found work on the morning paper, *The Nonpareil*, and at first boarded at home, which was managed by my only sister, who seemed to suddenly become a woman the night we arrived. An elderly widow was

employed to assist, but the fourteen year old girl was the accepted head of the household. I have never known a boy to suddenly become much older, as this young girl did, in the face of great responsibility. As I write this, I am disturbed by the thought I have not seen her in more than fifty years, although always highly respecting her. It has been said of us as a family that we have "funny ways." Whether I am more to blame than the others, I do not know.

Father was mad at the Methodist church, and had formed a connection with some sort of Brethren who had a little church on the edge of town nearest his house. They held revivals so noisy that news of them reached town, and, on my nights off, I occasionally went there, noting that while father solicited others to join, he let me alone, as he had done at Fairview and Bethany.

The Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* was a rather notable morning paper, but printed on a Washington hand press of the kind we used in Bethany, Gallatin and Maysville. The pressman was a carpenter who had deserted his own trade because of the larger wages offered by the *Nonpareil.* He was the steadiest man on the paper, and about the best paid. The editor was a man named Chapman, and father introduced me to him, but Chapman plainly gave me to understand the introduction wouldn't go after the subscriber left, and it didn't; I only knew him as a lordly character who frequently stalked into the composing room to grumble at someone who had neglected a correction in his proof sheets.

The printers were of a better class than I had known before. Some of them drifted in from the mysterious West which began across the river at Omaha. One claimed to be an Indian chief: he was so popular among the Indians, he said, that they had made him a head man. I heard of many such men during my life in the West, but never believed in them. I think this man invented the story for the purposes of a book he had written. Another was Sid Bennett, noted then as the fastest typesetter living. Night after night I ran races with him when he didn't know it, and increased my own speed. Still another printer employed on the *Nonpareil* was named Ben Allen, who had once been a Mormon, and lived in Salt Lake City. I had a fight with him, and suffered agonies for weeks because I broke his glasses: I had heard it was a penitentiary offense to fight with a man who wore glasses, as his eyes might be put out by a blow in the face.

Sunday mornings, after we were through work, we all usually went to the storage vaults of a brewery, and while the others drank a good deal, would not let me drink; they said I wasn't old enough. I recall with gratitude that the men I worked with when young were very generally good teachers, and behaved reasonably well themselves; the men I have known everywhere have been better than their reputation. Peter Bartlett Lee was famous as a tramp printer and drunkard in that day. I never saw him drunk in my life, and always thought him a rather decent fellow. His reputation was given him by the newspapers.

I soon found the walk home every night burdensome, as the distance was three miles, so I went to board at a little restaurant kept by an old German and his wife, and slept upstairs in a half-story room. The old people couldn't have been kinder to me had I been their son. They used a good many chickens in the restaurant, and, my hostess having discovered I was fond of chicken livers, I had them every day. I think they closed up, after a time, owing to age, and the motherly old German woman took me to a boarding house kept by a Mrs. Lawton, highly recommended me, and wept when we parted. I have greatly admired women from youth up; there is very little real meanness among them, except in their contests with husbands, and these may be necessary. I have also had quite generous admiration for the people generally, except in their attitude towards newspapers. A reader seems to have the same antagonism toward an editor that a woman has toward a husband; and perhaps editors, too, need regulating.

Mrs. Lawton had no other boarders except a Mrs. Hanley and her two children, who occupied the parlor and a room adjoining. Mrs. Hanley was as fine a lady as I had ever seen, not excepting Mrs. Kost, who found me noisy, and I soon learned that she had a rowdy husband who ran a variety theater in Omaha. Occasionally he appeared, and I thought him a fine fellow: once a week he brought his show to Council Bluffs, and gave me tickets to another phase of the new world opening up to me. For a time I had an ambition to

become a song and dance man, and associate with some of the beautiful women I saw on the stage. Those in Hanley's company were not very nice, but I didn't know it until he wanted to bring some of them to Mrs. Lawton's, and she wouldn't have them.

Mrs. Lawton was a reduced gentlewoman, as was Mrs. Hanley. Mr. Lawton had been a preacher, and was then a life insurance agent, which kept him away from home a good deal. When he returned, and found me there, he at once proceeded to sell me a five-thousand-dollar policy; his eloquence was so great I could not resist him, but never paid him a penny on the contract. I couldn't, there were so many delights in Council Bluffs to spend money on that I never had a dollar ahead, though earning considerable wages. Both Mrs. Lawton and Mrs. Hanley might as well have been widows, for their husbands were almost never at home, so I took them everywhere when not at work, and just about ran the house.

At the opera house, in addition to the variety show twice a week, there were all sorts of entertainments. I saw Sol Smith Russell there, with the Berger family of bell ringers. I met him many years later at a dinner I gave, and told him of some of the specialties he did in Council Bluffs. At that night's performance, he repeated many of them to my delight.

One day a new foreman arrived at the *Nonpareil* office, and when he had cases to give out, and I was entitled to them, he gave them to a friend. This made me so angry I quit. I have always belonged to the

union, and only employed union men, but some of the greatest injustices of my youth were perpetrated by fellow union men.

Someone advised that I go to Chicago, where we were always hearing "decent wages" were paid. I think I finally decided to go for the experience of riding on a railroad train, which I had never had. But I soon found I had made a mistake. I think I have been afraid of big towns ever since because of that early experience with Chicago. When I found the *Tribune* office, I knew I should not enter at the big front door, so went to a back stairway leading up to the composing room on the fourth floor. The stairway was on the outside, like a modern fire escape, and lined with printers, and I thought they were all "subs," so I sneaked away, and somehow found my way back—to Omaha. I was mad at the *Nonpareil* in Council Bluffs, and wouldn't go there. This was the only experience I have ever had with metropolitan journalism.

CHAPTER X

I HAVE observed that many men, writing of their youth, recall long conversations, dates, repartee, names and accurate record of incidents. I cannot remember how long I lived in Omaha, since my residence there was near sixty years ago. I was in the town recently, and could not find the office where I worked, or the place where I boarded. I only recall I was a printer employed by the Omaha *Republican*, a morning paper, and lived at a frame hotel with beer garden attachment. The owner of the *Republican* was a man named Balcom, and while I saw him frequently, I do not recall the editor or reporters. Somehow I remember that the editor of the opposition paper, Dr. George L. Miller, was noted as about the best man in town in his line.

Below the windows of the *Republican* composing room was a balcony. Every evening a band appeared there, to advertise theatrical performances in the same building. Our pressman was door tender, as he did not go to work until after the theater audience was dismissed. I knew this man, but recall he was honest, and never passed any of us in. But I often attended; the first actor of note I ever saw, Edwin Adams, appeared there.

Everything in Omaha was an improvement on anything I had known elsewhere. Frequently I went to the railway station, and saw trains from the West come in,

displaying the first splendor I had ever seen. Excursions of notables were frequent, and I was often in the crowd when the town welcomed them with music and oratory.

It was in Omaha I met one of the most remarkable men I have ever known: Joe Franklin, a printer employed on the *Republican.* He was also a musician, and preferred to play the piano in concert halls and theaters to setting type, when such engagements were available. Although he drank intoxicants regularly, he did not become drunk: liquor only exhilarated him, and made him brighter and more agreeable; but this pace soon told on him, and every few weeks he had a spell which laid him up. During his sickness he was very subdued and quiet, although still agreeable. But for his habit of drinking heavily, and then paying the penalty by disappearing for a week or two, he would never have lacked employment as a musician, for he played several instruments well. After his spells he worked as a "sub" on the *Republican* for a time, and here I became his special friend. We were soon rooming together, and in all my life I have not known a man who was kinder to me, or who more carefully watched over my welfare. When he was playing the piano in a concert hall (some of them were pretty rough: more than half saloon) I frequently went there at night to wait for him, before going to bed, and he looked after me like a good father. He was a man of probably forty when I knew him first, for I recall his hair and whiskers were becoming gray.

Every time I went into a place where he was employed, I noted the popularity of Joe. Those about the place were always wanting him to drink with them, and as he seldom refused, this made his connection profitable. In addition, he was entertaining, and always kept something "going on." No one could ask for a song or musical selection he did not know. I remember being greatly surprised once when some one produced a sheet of music, and seeing Joe read it at sight, first putting on nose glasses. I think he was the first man I ever knew who was well read, and who kept up with the characters and events of the day. When famous men came to Omaha, he could tell why they were famous, and quote them. I almost worshiped Joe Franklin, he was so wise, witty, tender, and so genuinely fond of me.

When business in our line became dull in Omaha, Joe suggested that we venture into the mysterious country from which the splendid trains came every day, and for a time we roamed over the West. In addition to his other accomplishments, he taught singing. Going into a town he would arrange a meeting at one of the churches, and outline his plan for a musical convention. Then for a week he would teach, closing with a concert, the income representing his profit, except that he made something from selling the song books used. He had rare taste in music, and usually his concerts consisted of three or four choruses, and as many quartets and duets as he could arrange. If he could not find a local violin player, he played a violin solo himself, or an obligato to a song. If there was a cornet

player in town, Joe played a duet with him. At these concerts I always appeared, in numbers in which he carefully trained me.

In one place he made arrangements to play a little cabinet organ with a medicine man, who traveled about in a wagon, and for a time I sang with him on the streets, to attract crowds. A famous duet then was "Larboard Watch," and we sang it a good deal. The medicine man was not a very good talker, and Joe frequently relieved him, greatly to the joy of the crowds, for he was witty and good natured. Of course we sold an Indian Remedy, represented as being made from herbs and barks, but I soon learned that it was made from ingredients to be obtained at any country drug-store. I confess my experiences in the West did not make me think much of Indians; nothing is more obnoxious to me than a "blanket" Indian, or an Indian "war dance." The Indians have not taken advantage of abundant opportunities to improve.

I remember visiting one town where no liquor was to be had at a public place, and Joe was almost desperate. We called on a business man, and Joe told him the situation: he said he had been drinking steadily all his life, and was in a bad way without it. He was so persuasive that the man went home, got a bottle, and gave it to Joe. Within an hour he was the sunniest man in town, and the best-behaved. I often think of Joe Franklin as the only real drunkard I have ever known: I believe most people drink intoxicants to "act smart."

I have had no fame since as great as I acquired in

singing the first part of "Larboard Watch" with Joe. People used to call for it over and over, and I believe we really did it very effectively. Once when we went into a drinking place for Joe's "night cap," the keeper refused to take any money, saying he had heard the duet, and that it was magnificent. Another favorite was the Marsellaise hymn, which we sang in unison. Joe said he had once heard two French soldiers, one with a leg off, and the other with an eye out, sing this song on the streets, and it had appealed to him as the most impressive thing he had ever heard. We sang a good many duets, and I have thought since that Joe may have "improvised" some of them, or composed the words and music, as he was a great musical genius.

Soon we were compelled to quit the road and the medicine man, for my partner had one of his spells. We were regarded as "show people" in the town, and attracted a good deal of attention. The editor of the local paper was quite surprised when I applied to him for work, as he regarded me as a professional singer.

In one of the towns where he was playing piano in a concert hall and saloon, and I was setting type, a pipe organ had lately been purchased, and there was no one to play it. A committee of women called on us, and asked Joe to play on Sundays, which he good-naturedly agreed to do. For a time he had a key to the church, and frequently took me there. He had once been a member of a circus band, and gave band imitations I thought tremendously clever, as no doubt they were: he would show how the band slowed up, to

accommodate the waltzing pony, and other tricks he had learned on the road. He made up accompaniments to the old religious songs I knew, and these I sang at the church services with great favor. We left this town because Joe became ill from drinking, and, after his recovery, would not go back to the church. It was a very decent town, and we had made nice friends.

Cheyenne, Wyoming, in that day was the roughest town I had ever seen. For a time both of us worked on the *Leader*, getting a dollar a thousand in gold; many a night I left the office ten or twelve dollars better off than I was when entering it in the afternoon. The *Leader* office had been enlarged with a tent lean-to. Although Cheyenne was booming and rough, the people seemed about like others I had known: the rough ones were floaters, and always made to behave pretty well. The West I knew in early days was never as rough as has since been represented in fiction. If a bold man became very objectionable, an equally bold man was appointed as an officer to control him.

Board and rooms were high, and Joe and I lived in a shack half boards and half canvas. It was surprisingly comfortable, considering that we slept on blankets. Joe soon found work in his favorite line in Cheyenne, and reveled in music and liquor. There were free spenders in the town, and Joe was always a favorite. He had one habit I have never noticed in any other man: he mixed his drinks: beer, wine, whisky,—anything that had a "kick in it," as he said.

In Cheyenne he lasted longer than usual without a

spell, but when it came, he was pretty bad. Several of the women he had known at the concert hall came to see him, and two of them once remained all night, when he was particularly depressed. One of these was quite young, pretty and modest, and I wondered how she came to be in such company. A number of rough characters among his men friends also came in. During his illness and convalescence, he never drank anything, and always said he had quit for good. During this illness he reformed so completely that he talked of sending for his wife, and engaging in the piano business. That was his dream all the time I knew him: to open a music store, and sell pianos. I never knew he had a wife until we were in Cheyenne, but he was so determined to reform, and engage in the piano business, that he told me a good deal about her. She lived somewhere in Ohio, and was a fine woman; he said he kept away from her for no other reason than that he wasn't good enough for her.

He was so long getting back in shape in Cheyenne that we went on a buffalo hunt. A man he had picked up acquaintance with sold buffalo meat in Cheyenne, and we went with him out to the plains, as he had a comfortable wagon. Killing the animals was very tame sport, as we hid along the river bank until they came down to drink, and then knocked one over, usually with a single shot. We soon had a load, and returned to Cheyenne, and to the piano playing and drinking. I never took part in the drinking: Joe said he had been ruined by it, and for me not to begin. Beyond an occa-

sional wine drink a bar tender fixed for me, with a good deal of lemon and sugar and water in it, I did not drink at all during my experience in the West. My partner may have kept me from it, but I do not believe I ever had any disposition that way. We later discovered that the man with whom we had gone after buffalo meat was a suspicious character, and accused of killing two Eastern hunters on the plains in order to rob them. We were in no danger when with him, as we had nothing, and he took us along for company. Outlaws become lonesome, as well as respectable people.

Joe Franklin had an adroit way of taking care of men who were carousing, and knew many such, because of his occupation. Once when I had gone to bed without him, he appeared in the tent late with two tipsy friends, and they spent the night there. At first they wanted to be noisy, but Joe managed them so well that they soon quieted down, after one of them had fired a pistol ball through the roof, and attracted a good many of the neighbors. Joe could manage any situation better than any other man I ever knew, and he soon had his two friends and the neighbors asleep. At another time I was in a saloon with him where some sort of celebration was going on. A man poured beer in the rim of another's hat, and there was a fight and a pistol shot which put out the lights. Joe Franklin pacified the angry men somehow, soon had the lamps lighted, and peacefully put an end to an affair rapidly becoming dangerous.

Later we went to Salt Lake City; part of the way

on a stage, and I have never since seen a town as fascinating as Salt Lake City was then. When I met a man on the street, I wondered how many wives he had. Certain others were said to have been in the Mountain Meadow massacre, although the stories may have been untrue.

Having been accustomed from early youth to attend religious services, I went to hear the noted Mormons preach, and the big choir sing. I could not see the Mormon services greatly differed from those I had been accustomed to, except that occasionally doctrinal sermons were preached, and polygamy exploited. I still remember a statement I heard a Mormon elder make from the pulpit: that since a man may have more children with two or more wives than with one, polygamy was his duty, "increase and multiply" being one of the commandments.

One of the apostles of the Mormon church was an uncle of a young man I knew in the printing office, and I occasionally called at the apostle's house with him. There were three wives in the family, all quite elderly, and they seemed as nice women as I had ever seen. The old apostle was much like the preachers I had long been familiar with, except that he was an abler and gentler man. I became quite well acquainted with one of the Apostle's three wives, and called her "Aunt Rachel"; she took a kindly interest in me, as all women do in boys, and I recall her putting on glasses and sewing buttons on my clothes when in need. Once I gave, in her presence, an imitation of the Methodists

in Fairview, and she called in the Apostle, who seemed a liberal man, and was amused.

The *News*, the Mormon paper on which we worked, did not greatly differ from other newspapers. We boarded with a widow named Willoughby, whose son Arthur worked on the *News*, but not as a typesetter; I think he was a subscription solicitor. Mrs. Willoughby had left a man because he had two other wives, and talked a good deal to Joe about a book she intended to write exposing Mormonism. Joe formed a plan to take her East as a lecturer, and invented a lot of harrowing experiences for her. I frequently heard her tell about her life, and it seemed rather commonplace, until Joe put in the "high lights" he said were necessary to interest the public, and which he said were always used.

I have never enjoyed life anywhere more than I did in Salt Lake City. It had a better theater than I had seen before, and better attractions. Frequently when I went there, I saw Brigham Young come in; occasionally with two or three women, but more frequently alone, or with other men. One day he came into the *News* office, the occasion being publication of some sort of church report, and he called at the composing room with the business manager, looking up some detail. I had worked on the report, and produced the copy they were looking for. The prophet seemed to question some of the figures, and wanted to see whether I had followed copy. It turned out that I had, and there was no correction. "You're right, and I'm wrong," he said,

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patting my shoulder, which I thought a good deal from the head of the Mormon church. I told about this incident later so much that for a time I was called "Brigham."

I went about a good deal with Arthur Willoughby, son of the widow with whom we boarded, and who was about my own age. I met many Mormon children, and remarked that most of them said they did not intend to remain Mormons; that they liked the Gentile way better. I was in love with two Mormon girls at the same time in Salt Lake, but they made me as much trouble with jealousy as did the Gentile girls in Gallatin, Missouri.

Joe Franklin's plan to get out a book of Mrs. Willoughby's experiences in Mormonism, and take her East as a lecturer, at least resulted in our having a good place to board, and we were happy there. But the inevitable reaction came, and when Mrs. Willoughby nursed her manager back to convalescence he was more ashamed than ever, and again made solemn vows to send for his wife, engage in the piano business, and quit drinking. He remained true to his wife some weeks; he even made preparations to join her in Ohio, and when he actually started, I went with him. He was still faithful at Omaha, and I parted with him there, after exchanging vows that we would never forget each other.

CHAPTER XI

Again at Omaha and Council Bluffs, after discharging the duty of visiting my family I soon found myself longing to visit old friends in Bethany, and took the road again, gradually working that way. After reaching St. Joe, the foreman of the *Herald* said he had received a letter from W. S. Stretch, an editor at Falls City, Nebraska, asking for a printer. As work was slack, I put the letter in my pocket, and began looking up the town. The printer was wanted, I recall, because one of the men was working on the United States census, which must have been that made in 1870, so I was in my eighteenth year when I landed in Falls City, after a journey by stage, for the town had no railroad.

I had been receiving considerable pay for my work, and the offer of twelve dollars a week at Falls City was so low I made preparations to leave. The owner finally raised his offer to fifteen, and then to eighteen, as he was in desperate strait. I closed with him temporarily, and he thought so well of me that he later paid me twenty, very unusual wages in the country at the time. Twenty dollars a week would be regarded as oppression now.

For a considerable time Stretch and I did all the work on the home-print weekly. I appeared for work on Monday morning, and Stretch had two cases of

long primer thrown in. As he thought himself a fast man, he intended taking the conceit out of me the first day. I never reached first rank among what printers called "the swifts," but I could always beat any ordinary man I ever knew, and easily beat Stretch, which he afterwards confessed made him so mad he thought of discharging me. A good many said I could best Sid Bennett, but I knew better. I think one of the sincerest regrets in my brother Jim's life was that he could never set type as fast as I could. He tried it for years, but I would always run away from him.

At St. Joe, Omaha, and on the road, my acquaintances were mainly printers. At Falls City I soon came to know not only everybody in town, but most of the farmers. One of these had been a ship owner and captain; all sorts of people were coming into my life. I think it was at Falls City I first began observing farmers as a class, and have never known any like those in American fiction or cartoons. A farmer in the Falls City neighborhood had been a stage owner in the West, and was really a remarkable man. A man named Lincoln was said to be a relative of the martyred president; certainly he looked like him, and was a fine man. J. Sterling Morton lived at Nebraska City, later became Secretary of Agriculture, and had a remarkable family of sons: one of them became Secretary of the Navy, and two or three others noted in the world of big business. During a grasshopper year, I remember a mass meeting at which a United States judge ridiculed the idea of issuing aid bonds, and that a Falls City

farmer named Smith tore him to pieces, and was a much better talker. The farmers I have known since have been mainly bright and capable, and ready and able to spring to arms to enforce their rights.

A boy living in Falls City at that time was called "Skip" Dundy. Later he was one of the prime movers in building Luna Park, in New York, and named it for his sister; I attended the marriage of Luna Dundy, and knew the family well. "Skip" Dundy was also one of the promoters of the famous Hippodrome in New York.

Twenty dollars a week was so much money in that day, in a small town, I could not spend it all, although I tried. I wore better clothes than I had before, lived better, and saw more of respectable life. At first I boarded at a very good hotel, where everyone was kind to me. Soon I was living with a doctor and his wife, and had a sitting room and bedroom of my own. No other resident of the town knew such luxury, and it cost only $3.50 a week, with board. Had anyone charged more than $3.50 per week for room and board in that day, I think there would have been a riot.

One of my friends was a young merchant, a somewhat dissipated man considerably older than I, so I advanced my age two years, to accord better with his. My women friends thought I was being ruined by this man, but the truth was I could not learn to be a drunkard, although willing, and was always telling him drinking was foolish. Long afterwards he confessed the belief I had saved him from a drunkard's grave. I made

many excursions with him during my idle time, but never found any sense in what he did, and so told him. All the wonderful things my friend proposed in the way of dissipation and good times turned out so poorly that I was always complaining, and finally converted him to sobriety. My experiences with this wild fellow never did me the slightest harm: indeed, they made me a sober man. For a time, on my way to dinner, I stopped at a saloon every day for a drink, but the absurdity of the performance soon caused me to quit it. The saloon keeper claimed to have very old and rare liquor, but to me the whisky of the old days was as bad as it is now. Whisky was always a mistake: an old, foolish notion modern men should have long ago abandoned.

There was little amusement in the town except church services and socials, and these I attended. Very soon I was singing in the choir, and playing the organ. At the special services I sang "The Ninety-and-Nine," and other gospel songs then famous. At Gallatin, Maysville and St. Joe, I never attended a church service; so far as my life was concerned such attendance was not suggested. If anyone I knew was religious, the fact was never brought to my attention as important. But at Falls City the church was a community center, the pastor an interesting and popular man; whoever went anywhere went to church. I do not recall any of the religious discussions at Falls City that had distinguished Bethany, but everyone went to church on the ringing of the bell, as they went to their meals, and said little about it.

A band was organized, and I played in it. I never knew a note, but could always play any instrument I attempted well enough to become a nuisance. I soon graduated from the bass horn to a tenor, and, as soon as I learned a tune, would play it with the cornets. Then they called me a "solo tenor," and I became famous for it. We had a teacher named Fred Duerfeldt, who had a son named Emil. This combination resulted in my first considerable compliment. He told us a good deal about his wonderful son, who played in the band at Arago. I was praised so much that finally Professor Duerfeldt became jealous, and said indignantly I was *no better* than Emil. I had no idea I was as good, for the Professor had led us to believe his son was a wonder.

I am satisfied the band's playing was always disgraceful, but we gave concerts, played at celebrations, had benefits, and raised money. I recall one member of the band who could never play a note, but country people never hear music, and anything satisfies them.

I sang comic as well as sentimental songs at the band concerts, and, although I blush now to think of it all, was quite a character. A dramatic society was organized, and of course I was in it. We presented "The Rivals," and I was generously praised, to which I modestly replied that "there was nothing in the part." After reaching the understanding I was always slow in acquiring, I discovered there was so much in the part I had taken that Joseph Jefferson became famous in it. But the humiliation did me good: I began look-

ing for the other foolish notions I probably entertained.

There were some really superior persons in the town, and they became my friends, which was a blessing, for the only education I have was acquired in that way. I was probably a well-meaning young fool at the time, and willing to learn whenever opportunity presented.

It seems to me now that I knew as many smart people in Falls City, an insignificant Nebraska village in 1872, as I have known since anywhere. There was a poet whose verses seemed about as wild, beautiful and worthless as any I have seen in maturer years. This man was a drunkard, and always appearing in the printing office where I was employed to read the beautiful things he had thought up. He usually wept over them, and I believe Stretch and I wept with him. A Methodist preacher I knew there was as eloquent a man as I have ever heard, not excepting a Bishop who once came from the East. The county in which Falls City was located voted bonds for a railroad never built, and the bonds fell into the hands of the well-known "innocent purchasers." A Falls City man was district judge, and destroyed the bonds in open court, for which act of rugged justice he landed in congress. In a neighboring state a similar issue of bonds annoyed the people forty years, and the county commissioners became outlaws for refusal to make a levy to pay them. Finally there was a compromise, and the county paid a great sum of which it did not owe a penny.

Two citizens of the town had been appointed to rather important positions elsewhere, and they fre-

quently had distinguished visitors. These I knew, and learned from them, after many humiliations. I had entrance to the best homes, and was generally fortunate. I did not always behave, but pretended to: I accepted the conventions, and believed I should obey them as well as I could.

The owner of the paper got married, and went away for two weeks, leaving me in charge. Many said the paper improved under my management, which wasn't true; I know I would be ashamed of everything I wrote if I should see it now. There was even talk of raising money and starting another paper with me in charge, but there is always talk of this kind in a one-paper town, and means nothing.

A young fellow named Charley Morden had been sent for to assist me during the absence of the proprietor, and later it was decided to keep him: maybe Mr. Stretch heard, on his return, the favorable talk about me, and concluded to spend all his time writing. Charley Morden was a little older than I, but had never shaved, a practice I indulged in regularly; he had fuzzy down on his face, and I coaxed him to shave, which improved his appearance. We became great friends at once, and I invited him to occupy with me the magnificent suite at the doctor's home.

Charley Morden was long manager of the *Oregonian*, at Portland, Oregon, and I often think of him as one of the strongest influences in my life. The sentimental talk found in books, magazines, and indulged in by statesmen, preachers and women never did me as much

good as the practical example of a printer who was not more than nineteen years old. He was religious, but not offensively or foolishly so, as some are. He said his prayers regularly every night before going to bed, and I thought it rather a nice custom, he did it so modestly, although I never adopted it. Everything else he did was after this fashion, and I have highly respected him from that day to this. Many of his daily practices were so much better than mine that I adopted them. He read a good deal, and I took that up, greatly to my advantage.

I have read a little every day a great number of years, and was surprised to find, on reading H. G. Wells' "Outline of History," that I knew *a little* of nearly every subject mentioned. The information was acquired from newspapers, books, magazines, listening to conversation: one may acquire considerable education without knowing it, in the course of a busy and long life.

I know there are two or more opinions on almost every subject, and it has always been my disposition to accept the majority opinion as the best. I noted that Mr. Wells did this in his book, and quarreled with some of his scientific assistants, in certain cases, as to what bulk opinion is. All my life I have believed that after the majorty of men have decided to believe a certain thing, it is the best we can do.

My first employer at Falls City finally sold a half interest to a Congressman, and later a man came into the firm who was president of the Nebraska senate. Both

became my intimate friends, and I was able to advance, although they did no more for my education than to talk to me in a friendly and intimate way. I have always been an admirer of able men, and willing to listen to their conversation: I think I have learned more from listening to smart men talk than from reading. My opinion has long been that millions of the ablest men that ever lived never wrote either books or magazine or newspaper articles.

A young man I knew in Falls City was Frank C. Grable, now an old fellow, and secretary of a fruit company in Florida. Recently he wrote about me, and I found much interest in his estimate of my character in that day, since I have often wondered what sort of man I was at eighteen. Mr. Grable was very religious, a clerk in a bank, and wrote in 1927:

"His (my) industry was remarked upon favorably, and I never heard of his taking a day off or doing any act the people found fault with. At our bank it was agreed his note was good, but he never let us have it."

My father talked so much of my laziness that I am rather proud of the testimony of this witness that, at eighteen, I worked steadily and was reasonably well-behaved, since I have long preached the importance of good conduct and industry.

Of course I was soon in love in Falls City. This is a part of my life of which I shall write little, as no one may write candidly about it and meet the approval of editor or public. Here I was first introduced to love as it is known in fiction, castles and romance. What

gallantry is displayed by knights and courtiers! It was all expected of me in Falls City. I had had a coarse notion of men managing women, learned at Fairview and Salt Lake City. At Falls City I discovered that, in better society, men are managed by women. It was a tremendously new, interesting and agreeable experience. I "went with the best set," all considerably older: sleigh rides, visits to neighboring towns, hay rides, horseback rides. The object of my special affection was lately from the East, which I greatly respected because of favorable reports. She had been educated in a girls' boarding school, and carefully reared: as fine a woman, I thought, as Mrs. Kost, of Gallatin, must have been as a girl—and here she was "going with me," appreciating me beyond my deserts, giving me music lessons on a melodeon, and other agreeable attentions when I visited her almost every evening of the week. It was the first fine thing in my life impressively presented. I do not know how long I lived in Falls City, except it was a lifetime. My experiences there were all pleasant, except going away.

I had some sort of disagreement with Mr. Stretch, which must have been trifling, for I recall he not only apologized when I quit, but said he "could not get along without me." I have always had a latent sulky disposition, and would not make up, so I went out into a desolate world, for I had been very happy at Falls City. I left my heart there, and doubted I would ever be able to get it back.

On the train by which I left (a railroad had been

built to the town during my residence, and I played in the band which welcomed it) an incident happened I have always remembered. Opposite me sat a young and pretty girl, and I do not believe I stared at her more than men usually do: but while I was looking at her, she winked at me. I would not have been more astonished had a rabbit shot at me while out hunting, for I had always believed men made the advances. I had seen some abandoned women, but regarded them as cast-offs of bold male pursuers. Therefore a pretty girl, apparently respectable, winking at me was a revelation; my first notice that women must be known and studied a long time before one may understand them even remotely.

CHAPTER XII

I SHALL never forget how sordidly and meanly I lived in Omaha, after an agreeable life of nearly two years. No one in Omaha knew that the Falls City Cornet band had accompanied me to the station, or that the choir of the Methodist church gave a notable social event in my honor the evening before my departure. There were two prominent men in Omaha who had visited in Falls City, and my relations with them were cordial, but I at least had sufficient sense not to look them up: I was like a rich man who had become bankrupt, and gone into hiding.

When I went to a printers' boarding house, the rough surroundings almost overwhelmed me, as I had acquired dainty ways at Falls City. In a few weeks I went West, and all I recall of the journey is the great number of antelope I saw on the plains. I often doubt the buffalo stories told of the early days of the West, but the antelope, I believe, were as numerous as is claimed. I read of men who killed a hundred a day when they were most plentiful, and people say it was a shame. They needn't worry; no such thing was done. All phases of the Western story are exaggerated atrociously by oldest inhabitants.

I soon met Joe Franklin at Denver, and we at once resumed our old relations. He always had a notion that it was man's first duty to live rather comfortably, and

had pleasant quarters, which I shared. He told me he had joined his wife in Ohio, as intended, but after a few weeks again realized she was too good for him.

For a time I "subbed" on the *Rocky Mountain News*, and then went to Golden, twenty miles away, in response to a hurry call from the proprietor of a weekly there. As he agreed to pay me Denver prices, I almost broke the office, greatly to the indignation of the other printers, who were working for much less.

There was another paper in town, an insignificant one, and somehow I formed a plan of getting control of it. Then followed mysterious conferences with Joe Franklin, who was to be my partner. I was not of age, and he had no more practical sense than a child, so we figured and talked, and every figure, every conversation, was foolish: we made rows of figures, added them up, and then, to be safe, cut the result in two. We should have made all our figures in red ink, but did not know it, and rather enjoyed the excitement. Finally we agreed to pay an enormous price, went in debt heavily, and became owners of the *Golden Eagle*. I cannot recall how long I ran it, but know I did everything wrong, with the best intentions in the world. A few years ago I looked over the bound file of the paper, and quietly burned it, to prevent my sons seeing it.

Joe Franklin might have been of great assistance to the paper, he made friends so easily. Golden was then the headquarters of a railroad, a smelting works, a paper mill, a coal mine, and a mining school, and had many agreeble citizens. My partner soon became fa-

mous with them, but did almost nothing to assist in getting out the paper. As a side line, he intended opening a piano store, and was so convinced that prosperity had at last singled him out for a blessing that he sent for his wife.

I liked her at once, but as Joe continued to drink as much as ever, and spend too much time with the friends he made, she soon confessed she was discouraged with the experiment. They lived in rooms back of the office, and I boarded with them. Mrs. Franklin's father had been the editor of a weekly paper in Ohio, and her acquaintance with Joe began there. She was a typesetter, and every day worked with me in getting out the paper, in addition to doing the house work. Joe appeared occasionally, as good-natured as ever, and told how everything was going fine: he said my writing, the success of the paper, were the talk of the town, but I knew better. At times he would have a short fit of industry, but soon drifted away to associate with his friends. Once he went to Denver; some special thing was going on in a concert hall where he had played, and they said no one could manage it as he could. I was compelled to go after him, finally, and he returned so good-natured, so full of enthusiasm for the success of whatever he had been doing, that we could only smile, and wish the dear fellow was more serious. Toward the last he spent most of his time in Denver, and finally sent me word he was not cut out for a publisher, and generously offered to give me his half interest, which amounted to no more than half the enormous debts we

owed. For a time Mrs. Franklin remained and helped with the work: it was the worst mixed-up affair in history, probably, with only children to manage it.

Once I heard of a place in the mountains where the citizens were willing to give a considerable amount to establish a paper, and insure it support. As I was not doing well in Golden, I arranged somehow to go to the place, but could find neither head nor tail to the story: such stories are always going 'round, but I never knew one to turn out true. I was indignant then, because of the unreliability of men, but am not so easily misled after long familiarity with them.

On my way home I left the stage at a place called Morrison, to walk to Golden. Night overtook me, and in walking along the road, I encountered a party of rough looking characters sitting about a fire. I was afraid of them in that lonely place. After I had gone half a mile, I realized that one of the men was following me, and when I hurried on, frightened, he called to me. It was Joe Franklin, and we sat by the road and talked half the night. Joe said he was not good enough for his wife, nor for me; that he was on the way to the devil, and hadn't much further to go, which I thought was true, judging from the rough crowd he was with. I begged him to go with me to Golden, but he would not. Had I met him when I was a prosperous journeyman printer, I could have helped him, but as a publisher I hadn't a cent to offer him. Then we parted, and I have never seen nor heard of him since.

When I told Mrs. Franklin about the incident, as I

thought it my duty to do, she made no comment. The subject was never mentioned again by either of us, and in a few weeks she went back to her old home in Ohio, her father having sent the necessary money from his slender store.

Somewhere in my inner self now I have a feeling that Joe Franklin was the best friend I ever had. He hadn't a bad habit, so far as I knew, except drinking, and this did not debase him as much as it does others. I have always had particular aversion for drunken men, the habit is so inexcusable, but Joe was never drunk, although always drinking. I thought a good deal of his wife, but sometimes feared her efforts to reform him only made matters worse. She was naturally a silent woman, and her plan with Joe was to look indignant and hurt, and say nothing; the worst punishment, I believe, wives have invented for mates. Joe never complained, but one of his specialties was to make fun of silent men, as he was himself a great talker. I loved them both, but Joe much the best.

CHAPTER XIII

At the age of seventy-five I frequently think with regret, and occasionally with amusement and wonder, of the days I spent in Golden. The people were kind, as I have found them everywhere, but I knew so little as to be unable to take advantage of it. I was in my twentieth year; almost ready to be declared a voter, but the mistakes I made indicate I was not ready for citizenship. I am not fully able to discharge that responsibility now; it seems to me I did not begin to truly appreciate the ordinary facts of life until I was between thirty-five and forty, and even after that age made mistakes for which I am blushing now.

I suppose it is generally admitted that the New York *Times* is one of the world's foremost newspapers. Its editor in 1927 saw fit to employ a famous man named J. E. House to write an article for the magazine section entitled: "Ed. Howe: Country Editor Supreme."

If at thirty-five or forty I was able to do work that attracted so great a compliment, even if undeserved, why was I, at about the time I became of age, the very worst country editor in the world? For surely I was that in Golden. I am no longer vain: I ask the question in an humble and thoughtful spirit. If I had any sense later, where was it concealed when I lived in Golden, and for a considerable time afterward?

No doubt when in Golden I had the confidence of

youth which so astonishes the elderly; I suppose that when I knew nothing, I believed I knew everything. The disposition of young people to trust themselves, and regard the elderly as old fogy enemies, is one of their greatest misfortunes, although called many beautiful things.

On the opposition paper at Golden there was employed a writer named James T. Smith, a man of ability and experience. He was always saying in a new way that I was a fool, and it made me furious, as I did not then suspect it. Many years afterwards, when I saw a mean thing about me, and credited to a Denver paper, I knew Smith wrote it, for he went to Denver from Golden. Lately I am seeing fewer of them, and believe he is dead, as he was considerably older.

During my poverty and blundering in Golden the knowledge that I was soon to be married was gnawing its way into my consciousness. I suppose I had boasted of prosperity at Golden to the lady to whom I was engaged. What young fellow would have neglected to write to the object of his affection that he had created a sensation in a new community? Love is not a thing to be candid and sensible about. To save my life I could not have written to Falls City that I was a failure in Golden, and that the marriage should be put off.

Strangely enough I actually attracted some attention as a writer in Golden. There was then printed in Denver a paper called *The Mirror*, edited by a man named Stanley G. Fowler, who seemed to be an editor of experience and ability, and was so accepted by news-

paper men. This man actually praised me! Every week he reprinted long extracts from my paper; and to add wonder to wonder a Boston publisher wrote suggesting he might be interested in a book of the writing exploited by the Denver *Mirror*. I worked many nights getting up a collection of it. I am sure I wrote to the lady of my choice that a publisher in Boston was considering a book of mine, and did not later write her that the manuscript was returned.

When I say there was not a line I wrote for the Golden *Eagle* that had sense in it, I am not trying to be over-modest; I am only telling the truth as it is illuminated with fifty years of later experience in writing. I did not have sufficient judgment to devote my time to local happenings, as I should have done, but attempted to be witty when I had no wit. Instead of devoting close attention to digging out from under my terrible load of debt, I took vacations that were foolish, unnecessary and expensive, as is done to-day, and even more generally. One of them was a long horseback trip into the wildest part of the Rocky mountains with a preacher; in my early life I had considerable admiration for preachers, regarding them as unusual men. Later I outgrew this: I found others better able to instruct and benefit me.

In the mountains I found material for really interesting writing, for we visited the gold camps, and met trappers and hunters, and many other unusual characters. Had I written a good description of the town of Fairplay, as I had opportunity to do, it would

have made my fortune to-day. I knew many of the frontier towns in that early time, and Fairplay was in many respects one of the strangest. My companion, the preacher, held services in one of the dance and gambling places on a Sunday night. I was familiar with these, from my experience with Joe Franklin; but Fairplay was further from the beaten path than anything I had seen before. Why did I not have sufficient wit to tell the story simply? I sang hymns in the rough place, and the men and women present generally knew the tunes, and joined me. But they were not moved to tears: they were simply respectful, as people nearly always are in presence of religious services. I botched the story: on encountering it many years later, I burned it.

But my admirer, the Denver *Mirror*, reprinted it! Fowler, the editor, even invited me to visit him, with a view of becoming his partner! Never was fool more cruelly treated.

The crucial test came when I was compelled to get money with which to go back to Falls City, and be married. A date had been agreed upon before I left Colorado, and the object of my affection wrote that it was necessary for me to formally ask her father's consent, as it was time to begin her preparations, and the coöperation of her father was necessary.

I wrote the letter; I had been so zealous a lover I could not have avoided doing whatever was suggested. So on a certain day I left Golden for Falls City, knowing anyone as poor, foolish and young as I was should

not get married, but there was no way out of it. I recall that on my way to the railroad station a banker named Everett came out of his door, and said:

"Well, you poor fish, here is a year's advance payment on that advertisement of mine."

I think the amount was thirty dollars; without it, my bride would have been hungry on her wedding trip.

The bride had arranged the wedding on the grand scale with which she had conducted the affair throughout. There was in it a simulation of the grandeur of palaces, courts and cathedrals, although it occurred in a story-and-a-half house in a country town. There were bridesmaids, old schoolgirl friends who had come on from a distance, and a wedding march played on a melodeon. The bride threw her bouquet; there was a wedding dress and veil; two officiating pastors: the curtains were drawn (it was in the afternoon), and the lamps lighted. No detail was neglected that a romantic woman might hear of. I knew the bridegroom was not worth it; I was conscious that it was all rather ridiculous, and somehow resented it. The bride was excited, and a little domineering, as I think brides usually are, and, five minutes before the ceremony, made me sulky by demanding that I "make up" with a relative I did not like.

I had invited father, and, greatly to my surprise, he was there. Just what this man of great experience in marrying thought of it all, I never knew; but I recall that at the wedding feast he ate so much cove oyster soup, not knowing there was to be anything else,

that he could not do justice to the liberal offering that followed.

I spent my nuptial night in Atchison, Kansas, where I afterwards lived fifty years. Neither of us realized what was to happen to us later in Atchison, although there was a premonition of it, as we had another "fuss." In the ring I had given her—a poor one, but I had a hard time getting even that—she requested that the word "Mizpah" be engraved, believing it meant: "The Lord watch between thee and me." A capable historian writing many years later said it didn't mean that at all, but was of Phallic origin, a word which sent me to the dictionary. If you do not know it, I advise you not to.

I dreaded going to Falls City. I dreaded going back to my wretched affairs at Golden. I knew the people at Falls City believed the marriage unsuitable, because of my youth and poverty; I believed the people at Golden would. When our honeymoon was three days old, we went to a hotel in Golden to live. The rate was high, and I not only had no money, but was greatly in debt. For weeks I worked every night until eleven or twelve o'clock to scrape enough together to exist. There was always one source of ready money: job printing, and this I solicited and got out at night, at cut prices: anyway to get it.

I had heard somewhere that every married man should own a home, so I bought one on credit, agreeing to pay a price much above its value, and lost it, with the actual money I had been able to put into it. I

bought a cow, and milked it, and have hated cows ever since.

In this house my first child was born, an experience terrible for the father as well as the mother. It is often said fathers are rough animals, but I believe I suffered as much as my wife; and the little girl that appeared in my life seemed the daintiest creature I had ever known. I stole a poem to celebrate the event, and my admirer on the Denver *Mirror* caught me at it, and was never the same afterward. As a result, I have since been careful to give credit.

My affairs in Golden were so desperate that I soon had my brother Jim come out, but he had no knowledge of the kind required. He was a good printer, but knew nothing of the other problems confronting me. I had paid too much for everything, and doubt if there was a man in the world who could have worked success out of the mess. So we sold one-half interest to a young fellow for cash. This was used to pay my most pressing debts, and the others Jim assumed for his half of the paper.

And then I went back in humiliation to Falls City, where I made most of the same mistakes all over again, but always with the best intentions.

I have been naturally disposed to honesty, but carelessness, lack of advance judgment, have steadily beset me. I had been fairly successful as a journeyman printer, but was a failure as a publisher.

I have always been devoted to friends, and my special friends in Falls City were attacked by an opposition

paper. I had no notion they were guilty; I do not know now that they were, but the opposition made it so appear, and I made another failure: two within the same number of years, and just as I was coming of age. The man whose cause I championed in my final days in Falls City was a county treasurer under fire, a good fellow I believed in, and still believe I had reason to. If he was guilty of wrong doing, I never knew it, but we were overwhelmingly defeated.

CHAPTER XIV

During my second residence in Falls City there was one happy experience: I attended the World's Fair at Philadelphia. I had never been in a city, and when I walked down Market street it was so wonderful that I was surprised an admission fee was not charged. For a week I had the best time I ever had in my life, or ever will have. I accidentally ran across father, who was an exhibitor at the Fair. He was always inventing things, and had a contrivance that year to revolutionize the steam engine. He was not very cordial, having resumed his old Fairview temper.

In some way I found board and room at the home of a dentist, who had occasion to lance my first wisdom tooth. Two other guests were an elderly couple named Rathbone, from New York City. As there was not much harm in me, and I was very enthusiastic, I suppose these fine old people were amused, for they were very kind. When they invited me to accompany them to attend a Theodore Thomas concert at Forest mansion, I said I would go, but did not expect to enjoy it, as there was nothing "in" classical music. I am blushing as I write it, for I said it to two cultured people.

When we went to the concert, the players were tuning up, and I thought the program had begun: it sounded like the classical music I expected to hear.

Presently the conductor appeared, wearing a swallow-tail coat, a thing I had never seen before, and did not know existed.

When the orchestra began playing, the music immediately appealed to me as the most beautiful thing I had ever heard: I had been singing and playing for years, and never heard any music. I was like a wild Indian from the plains with natural musical temperament: here was a beautiful thing I did not know existed. Once Mrs. Rathbone found me on my feet, and pulled me down: I did not know what I was doing half the time.

The Rathbones were greatly amused because of my enthusiasm, and next took me to hear a solo concert by noted stars: and again my friends were surprised, for I did not like it. And I've been that way ever since: I do not care for soloists, although greatly moved by capable orchestra, band or chorus. After hearing Paderewski play one number (in later years), I was ready to go home. I can get little out of the piano, or a vocal soloist. The violin is the only solo instrument I will submit to, and then only to note how it may be manipulated. At present I never attend a solo concert except to *see* a noted man like Kreisler, and amateurs are painful to me.

I recall that Dom Pedro, then Emperor of Brazil, was present at the Musical Congress I attended in Philadelphia. Brignoli, then quite old, was one of the singers, and his selection "Embarrassment," which I murdered for years afterwards.

While out seeing the world, I intended going to New York, and the Rathbones regretted they would not be there to show me about. But they insisted on my going to their home, which was in charge of servants, and this I did, carrying a letter to the butler. I've always wondered that the Rathbones did not accompany me to New York, for the pleasure of noting my surprises, as I think they were a little disturbed because of my admiration for Philadelphia. Possibly they hesitated because I constantly wore a plug hat which did not look well on me. I recall I had my picture taken in it at Niagara Falls, to prove I had been there, but cannot present it herewith, as I destroyed it in shame years ago.

Somehow New York did not impress me as did Philadelphia; but I did not see much of it, as I was scared, and remained only a day or two. However, I found Madison Square Garden, where Pat Gilmore's band was giving concerts, and was thrilled again. There was a bar in the building, and, by means of some sort of attachment, I was able to buy a glass of champagne for twenty-five cents. I didn't like it, and never have since. I have tasted a good many wines, in a good many places and years, but have never been able to understand the enthusiasm about them.

Music has remained my great passion. For many years I have employed big professional bands to give free concerts, when I could afford it. On one such occasion, Sorrentino, decorated by the King of Italy for proficiency in music, led sixty men before an audience

of fifteen thousand. Afterwards he said to me in broken English:

"The greatest event of my musical life! The appreciation! The attendance! Marvelous!"

Good music capably rendered is the only thing there is no impurity in; the noted bands I have employed have preached great sermons to great audiences, so I have accomplished a little good in the world. If I had a fortune, I should travel about three months every summer, giving two free concerts daily, with such a band, with chorus added. It is the one great opportunity no rich man has thought of.

Herman Bellstedt, who succeeded to the leadership of the old Cincinnati band, also gave concerts for me. The attendance was so great that Bellstedt and his men could not get to the music stand for a time. He was angry at first, but when I drove him to town that night, he repeated what Sorrentino had said:

"The greatest event of my musical life! The appreciation! The attendance! Marvelous!"

Once I employed Ellery's Royal Italian band to give four free concerts, and thousands have told me they never heard any music until I provided it. The enthusiasm a country church member finds in a sermon by his bishop, I find in music: I experience every phase of sentiment in attending the performance of a great orchestra, which alone now satisfies me, providing the selections also accord with my understanding and taste. But I do not regard it as divine; only as one of the beautiful things men may know. When I leave

the concert hall, my dream is over, and again I walk carefully on the highways of the commonplace.

During my last days in Falls City I printed something about a stuttering man. I was a long time learning that the people are very sensitive about newspaper notoriety, and was in the wrong, but meant no harm: I now criticize that class quite severely. I had heard a funny stuttering story, and attributed it to the man, and he was greatly offended. On meeting me we had one of the funny, harmless country town fights in which two men push each other, and are very angry and ridiculous. We were arrested by a constable, and taken before a justice of the peace: the poet whose verses had caused me to weep. The best lawyer in town volunteered to defend me, and a lawyer almost as good represented the stuttering man.

These two performed as grandly as though delegates to a World Peace Congress, greatly to the delight of a large crowd that speedily gathered, including many women. The attorney for the stuttering man abused me as though I had been a tremendous criminal; I was never so humiliated in my life, since I knew him intimately: he was almost the best friend I had in town.

Then my attorney spoke for the defense. It was beautiful, eloquent, and brought tears to my eyes. A citizen asked the privilege of speaking, and also plead for me. This moved me still more, until his action brought out another citizen who denounced me.

I was utterly crushed, until I noted suppressed merriment on the faces of those present, and realized it was

all a joke: they were amusing themselves at my expense: making fun of me. Probably I should have suspected it earlier, since I knew the town men were much given to practical jokes, and as they were very bright, and hadn't much to do, the jokes were frequently so amusing I had enjoyed them myself.

I am specially sensitive when a joke is "on" me, and nothing would have kept me from leaving Falls City. The lawyers later apologized, and the stuttering man and I exchanged regrets, but at that time in my life I made a good deal of "my dignity," and I would have left town had there been no other place to go than the famous bad place described in church.

CHAPTER XV

I DO not know why I located in Atchison, Kansas, where I have been a citizen half a century. I had never been in the town except to pass through it a few times. I knew nothing of conditions there, nor none of its people, and it had morning and evening papers well established. I only know I started a paper there in 1877, struggled along many years, and finally mine was the only one in town, after I had killed each of my opponents several times. My morning competitor assisted me somewhat in getting himself elected governor two terms; I have long believed that to get your opponent in politics is equal to getting him in jail. For four years his paper was run by hired men, and when he came back it was not paying expenses. The evening paper assisted in its downfall by a little more than the usual shiftlessness found everywhere in newspaper offices, and in business establishments generally.

I will make oath I hadn't two hundred dollars capital to begin with, and was compelled to borrow money with which to buy a quarto Gordon job press. I brought with me a font of brevier type from the wreck at Falls City, and, with this outfit, started a newspaper of one sheet, 10½ x 15, of two pages only; the queerest daily paper ever seen in the United States, I have no doubt.

For the first two weeks we made fun of ourselves, to save the people that trouble, and hired a boy to de-

liver the paper free. I left my family in Falls City for a time, and for weeks my brother Jim and I did all the work, in addition to job printing. We slept in the office, and usually worked not only all day, but until late at night: we were able to do a large amount of work owing to the early training father had given us. We wrote almost nothing: when I came in from the street, I placed my note-book on the small cap case, and put my items in type direct. Jim frequently set up news items from verbal skeletons I hurriedly gave him. If I had an advertisement, I put it in type, and placed it in the forms where it belonged. If I brought an order for job work, I kept it in my pocket, and that night we got it ready for delivery next morning. There was always a profit of a dollar and a quarter in five hundred bill heads, and we could get out such an order in an hour, as our methods were simple and quick. We had no job type at first: only that used on the newspaper, but our customers were good-natured, and did not object.

I am sure that for four or five years the Atchison *Globe* was of little consequence, but somehow it was received kindly: I am certain that within a few weeks hundreds of citizens were patting me on the back, and enjoying our "jokes" on the other papers, both edited by strong men.

Not long after I arrived one of them made a speech in a hall, and I was there to report it. A man I did not know asked me:

"Who is he?"

I replied it was Noble Prentis, of the *Champion*.

"The coming man in this town," said the man, "is that young Howe, of the *Little Globe*."

I never knew who he was; evidently a stranger, but he had absorbed some of the prejudice against the old papers. Many years later I was forced to take a dose of the same medicine, and found it bitter.

At the end of two weeks we sent the carrier out to say that in future the paper would be ten cents a week; the price of the other papers was twenty-five. The boy came back with his pockets bulging with money: most of the people to whom he had been delivering the paper free said they would not only take it, but would pay twenty cents for the two weeks it had been delivered at their doors: the second Saturday after the establishment of the Atchison *Globe*, it actually took in enough money to pay its expenses and the board and keep of the two men who got it out. From that day to this it has been profitable.

Even in that remote day I was familiar with the faults of newspapers, and these we made fun of. Our competitors made much of interviews, and these we mocked, by running long display headings over imaginary interviews of three or four lines.

Mary Anderson was then a young, beautiful and talented actress, and came to town to play "Ingomar." I wrote an imaginary interview with her, in which she was not permitted to say a word: the reporter did all the talking, and rambled on about Atchison people and Atchison incidents. It was all good-natured and

harmless, and I have been told since Miss Anderson cut the interview out of the paper, and carried it away with her. I interviewed Joseph Jefferson and Henry Ward Beecher without seeing them, and, as I highly respected them both, was inoffensive. Mr. Beecher delivered a lecture called "The Wastes and Burdens of Society." I was then only twenty-four, slow in coming to maturity, and this was the first notable intellectual event of my life: I understood him, and his talk moved me profoundly. Beecher wore a shiny black coat, and looked rather tired and seedy, but I soon forgot criticism, as he delivered the best public address I have ever heard. Somehow he reached my understanding with his great intelligence and experience. Of all the speakers I have known since, not one has done me equal good. I do not recall a word he said: only that I walked out of the hall a better and wiser man from having heard him. I never cared for his writing, but that address made me his friend for life. Previously I had been in the grade schools of life: in Atchison I began attending college, with Beecher as one of the instructors. Later I was familiar with the scandal in his history, but remained his steadfast friend. It seemed to me then, and it seems to me now, that considering his popularity, his robust human nature, his power, his temptations, his sins were not great. A recent book devoted to Mr. Beecher's life is unfriendly, but I found no charge against him that may not be made against almost any man, with many strong points admitted that most of us lack. I have long been disposed to judge men by

their average; if it is reasonably high, I am charitable with faults that look pretty black when hundreds of young reporters and old enemies take after him. In my own old age I feel I have never done well in anything; only what people call "fairly well," at times. I have been a rough animal all my life, and have never known anyone in whom I did not frequently detect wildness suppressed because of knowledge that practice of civilized rules pays.

When I went to Atchison it was a town of 12,000, and had many bright men; most country towns are drained dry of their best men by the cities, but Atchison in the old days had aspirations and prospects. It had been headquarters of the Ben Holliday stage line, and of freighting to the West: the early trails from California, Colorado, and Montana led to Atchison, and many of the big buffalo and Indian tales were first told there. It had a railroad before Kansas City, and was an interesting, promising place with history and "characters," including a gang of the most noted three-card monte men in the West.

Oscar Wilde drifted in as a lecturer. I disliked him before he arrived, and dislike his memory to this day, and my "interview" with him was unfriendly. Bob Ingersoll appeared, and, as he read his lecture, I have never been able to understand his great fame as an orator.

I often say now that the best "shows" I have ever seen I saw in Atchison. Frank Daniels appeared in "The Electrical Doll" in a hall over a livery stable. I

have been familiar with most of the funny men of my time, and none of them equaled Frank Daniels. I saw Jeffreys Lewis in "Forget-Me-Not," and she is the greatest actress in my memory, although I have witnessed performances by Sarah Bernhardt in Paris, and by Ellen Terry in London. I saw Fay Templeton in "The Mascot" when she was a young, slender and beautiful girl; later I saw her in a big town when she was so old and fat as to be almost a caricature. Country people are not so much out of the world as is believed by those who have always lived in cities.

Newspapers are always unpopular, however good they are, and we made fun of our competitors. One was Republican and the other Democrat, and made much of politics, usually ridiculous, and we exploited the ridiculous side. I think we were actually making money in a month. I had been deeply in debt in Golden and Falls City, but never was in Atchison; it was the most curious, fortunate accident in the history of newspapers. I never had any trouble making money in Atchison, but, owing to carelessness, had trouble keeping it.

The town had a great man everybody picked at. We soon discovered this, and picked at him, too, but always with good-nature, for there was really no harm in him except vanity.

One of our best sources of "copy" was to pretend to receive letters from readers. These we actually made up, being familiar with the ridiculous letters sent to established newspapers. Then we invented imaginary

controversies. We did particularly well with a series of letters from an imaginary hired girl, who told of her ambitions, her distresses, and the woman for whom she worked. Jim represented the hired girl, and did well: he had the better side, for I soon tired of replies from employers of hired girls, and tried a young man who wanted to marry our correspondent. But Jim would have nothing to do with him, unless properly introduced, as the young woman he represented had an Uncle Amos who had been an alderman, and she would not take up with strangers except with proper introduction.

In every town there are men able to write well, and we soon attracted their attention. One contributor was anonymous: I have always believed he was a Catholic priest, but am sure he was one of the best writers I ever knew anywhere. He worked for us faithfully for some months, tired of it, and I do not know yet who he was.

One man started a controversy which ran fiercely for weeks: "Why Does Not God Kill the Devil?" It seems a fair if delicate question, and I thought it very original and clever. A vicious, active fiend has been in mischief many centuries. Why does not the all-powerful God kill him? I discovered many years later that the question was asked as far back as Daniel De-Foe: *Friday* asked it of *Robinson Crusoe.*

In all my newspaper life I have benefited largely by bright acquaintances. In Atchison there was a negro called Parson Twine, as black as midnight, but very

original. Every time I met him he said something in which there was a suggestion, and I quoted him so frequently that he became famous locally: sometimes I credited him with bold things I did not care to father myself. He liked it so well that for years he devoted his spare time to thinking up what he hoped were wise sayings. I have heard Ralph Waldo Emerson knew a carpenter he cultivated because of his wisdom; all writers are mere reporters of what they hear and read. I knew railroad men who not only brought me butter and eggs from the country, but thought up things for me while out on their runs; there was scarcely a citizen who did not occasionally say something worth while, if properly edited. One young Irishman, could analyze humanity almost as well as Nietzsche, although I do not believe he ever read a book, or wrote a line. But how he could think and talk!

My half brother Jim, then about thirty, was a quiet, reserved man, and could not work on the streets, so I did all this. I was able to solicit advertising, job work and subscriptions while getting news, and, on returning to the office, was business manager. This was the method I was compelled to learn, but did it easily, and kept it up all my life on *The Globe*. In a little while we ran the paper four times through the job press, and had four pages. I was not only business manager, editorial writer, managing editor, paragrapher, advertising solicitor, circulation manager, and type-setter occasionally, but wrote the society news. Once a milliner complained to me of a customer who was unrea-

sonable, and I wrote a "hint" item about it, later discovering I had criticized my own wife.

Men of the craft marveled that I did it, but I never found the system difficult. And it was very effective. Long after we had a three-story building of our own, perfecting press and type-setting machines, farmers would pay their subscriptions only to me, as a result of the old system, and it became a nuisance. We had subscription clerks, but the farmers would force their way into my private office, and I was compelled to take them out to the proper department. When we were getting out a considerable paper, advertisers wanted me to write their advertisements, and mourners their death notices. All the petty complaints came to me; about the police court, the carriers, of which I knew nothing.

An old fellow came up to me on the street the other day, and said:

"*The Globe* never mentions me without telling my age. It is very offensive; I wish you would stop it."

I said to him he knew I had not been on *The Globe* in more than ten years, and had no connection with it.

"Yes, I know," he replied, "but you started it. You can stop it. I wish you would."

Recently a woman came out to my home to make a row because she had been refused credit at *The Globe* office. She kept saying: "I was always your friend: whatever the others said, I stood by you," and I couldn't get in a word to explain that I had not been in the office in months, and had nothing to do with it.

I dread to go down town now because of people I meet who say they were always my friends, as though all the others had been my enemies.

In my active days, I knew every man, woman and child, black and white, in Atchison, but could not remember names. This failing was a constant source of trouble. A farmer I had known for years would pay me his subscription on the street, and I could not remember his name. If I acknowledged I could not, he did not like it. There was a hardware man named Perry Hayes who knew everybody, and usually I was able to describe the farmer so accurately to Perry that he could name him, but frequently I credited the wrong man, and this made more trouble.

One of the vivid memories of my life is of the first days I went on the streets of Atchison as a reporter and solicitor for *The Globe*, and one of the reasons I have loved the town devotedly fifty years is that everyone received me kindly. There was a noted man called the Old Spider, and I dreaded to meet him, but he welcomed me cordially, and I was his devoted friend for life. He was a railroad lawyer, and may explain why I have always been a friend of the railroads. When he ran for State Senator, I howled for him in *The Globe* until I was almost ridiculous. He promised great shops for the town; why should I not be for him? I was denounced at public meetings for supporting the railroad candidate, but he won triumphantly.

A curious incident in the history of that campaign is that the Old Spider asked the railroad company for

$500 with which to pay *The Globe* for its services. When the money came, *The Globe* was doing its best, so he used it in paying other campaign expenses. Two of his partners afterwards told me they thought I received it, but I never did: I knew nothing about it until many years later. I never knew anything about the corruption in newspapers so commonly reported. No advertiser ever tried to influence me because of his patronage: I was always independent—sometimes too much so. The Old Spider once said to William Allen White (as Mr. White reported in the Emporia *Gazette*):

"They say I 'run' Ed. Howe. The facts are, he runs me."

He always consulted me in his railway campaigns, as he consulted most of the other citizens. And I never supported anything I did not believe was for "the good of the town"; and was often mistaken, for the Old Spider never built the shops he promised. For a good many years he made big promises, and never kept one of them, although I have no doubt he tried to. I never knew of a corrupt gang robbing the town; all the mistakes I have known in town building have been due to ignorance, extravagance, or carelessness, and not to corruption.

Our first newspaper press was a second-hand country Campbell, still in use in a weekly newspaper office in Kansas; with an occasional new part, these presses last forever. We operated this by hand power, and I frequently took a turn at the wheel, in addition to my other duties. One of our main dependents for motive power

was a printer known as "Little Ed," who set type all day, and then turned the wheel of the Campbell when the paper came off, for extra pay: we had good printers who did not average more than two dollars a day. The modern linotype operators certainly average five times that, and many of them make much more.

In course of time we disposed of the job office, and lost the profit from printing sale bills, so I persuaded the farmers to advertise their sales in the paper. In a little while no sale bills were printed in the town; we had all such business as display advertising in the newspaper.

This encouraged me to extend the idea to political advertising; candidates also had a habit of tacking up posters everywhere on telegraph poles and barn doors. A man named John Taylor had an ambition to be sheriff, and I arranged with him to run a series of display advertisements in *The Globe*. I prepared the copy, and in a little while his advertising was the talk of the county, as I was interested, and put my heart into it. He was nominated, and then I repeated the performance in the election campaign, winning easily, although he was a Democrat, with seven hundred natural majority against him. This attracted so much attention that thereafter we had a large amount of display political advertising, and it has continued ever since.

A Democrat named Allaman wished to be mayor, and arranged with me to be his advertising agent: he made no suggestions whatever, and let me conduct the campaign in my own way. As a Democratic member of the

legislature he had offered a bill separating the whites and blacks in the public schools, and was very unpopular with the large colored population. My first advertisement was a full page, and in it he declared he wanted no negro to vote for him: I knew the negroes were all against him, anyway, and believed it a good idea.

The negro problem was a very annoying one. A fine old southerner lately deceased had been sued by a colored woman for a part of his estate, with the claim that she had been his common-law wife, a piece of impudence I was very disagreable about. The people joined me in this indignation, and I stirred up the whites considerably with Allaman's advertising. The politicians thought I was committing suicide for my candidate, but he was elected by a large majority. His name was signed to all the advertisements, but I wrote them. Later every candidate took space in the *Globe*, although I quit writing the copy.

During one presidential campaign a few years ago, I noted that all the big newspapers and periodicals of the country contained display advertising for the candidates: I have always claimed that I started the system. At first it was adopted in near-by towns, the circle gradually enlarging until finally it appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Vogue*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and every other important publication. Editors have no special reason to admire me, but advertising agents of newspapers have benefited somewhat from my activities.

CHAPTER XVI

Two unusual newspaper men were early competitors of mine in Atchison: Tom Stivers and Noble Prentis. There is a text enjoining us all to love our enemies, but we didn't do it in Atchison: we hated them. Both men soon went to better positions, much to my advantage, but I learned much from them before they departed. Stivers was what the French call a *raconteur:* I have rarely known a wittier man, but he was rather lazy, and knew only such people as pleased him, whereas a successful reporter in a small town must know everybody, and get along with them. Prentis was a good writer, but of no use whatever as a reporter in a country town. He once made a brief trip to England, and wrote sketches called "A Kansan Abroad" which would be accepted as pure literature if printed a hundred years from now. But he was a caricature as a reporter; reporting is one thing, literature another.

When I wrote "The Story of a Country Town," which I did within five years after reaching Atchison, I dedicated it to J. P. Pomeroy, Chas. A. Shoup and Frank Everest. Originally I had John E. Utt heading the list, but he said some witty thing about my enthusiasm, which I heard of, so I left him out. No doubt his witticism was just, but it made me angry: one does not care to hear a special friend has said around town he is crazy.

I once met B. L. Winchell in Atlanta, Georgia, when he was regional director of all railroads in the South, and he told me John E. Utt was the best railroad man he ever knew; and Utt came to Atchison direct from the little village of White Cloud, Kansas, where he was born. But he lacked Winchell's steadiness, and did not reach his distinction.

In 1877 B. L. Winchell was his clerk in Atchison. Winchell's first promotion was to Kansas City, where he became assistant general passenger agent of the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf. I was his tremendous admirer, and worried because his chief, an elderly man named Lockwood, hung on so long. I knew Ben would succeed Lockwood, in case of Lockwood's promotion or death, and did a very impudent thing: I printed items in *The Globe* suggesting that Lockwood retire or die, if he coudn't earn promotion, and give my friend a chance. Fortunately the difficulty soon solved itself: Ben was promoted to the presidency of a Western railroad, and from that start went upward so steadily I was satisfied.

J. P. Pomeroy had come to town as the representative of a railroad whose general manager I did not like. He called at the *Globe* office originally to capture me, but I captured him, and we got rid of the general manager. Pomeroy was about the first really cultured man I had ever known. He later ran a coal business, and I began writing for him the "paid locals" for which the Atchison *Globe* came to be famous. Half its present income is from this source, but I know of no other paper

which uses it. A man goes about in the West now teaching the system to other papers, but with little success. The explanation is, we built it up in the course of many years, and the people became accustomed to it. Pomeroy was looked upon in that early day as a tremendous advertiser, but I don't believe his account ever amounted to a hundred dollars a month. Our rates were low, but so were our expenses.

In 1878–9, Geo. B. Harris was General Agent of a little railroad in Atchison. Later he became president of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, and probably did a good deal toward building its present fine reputation among the A 1 railroads. Many of the modest men I knew intimately in that day became famous as bankers, lawyers, judges: one man who lived twenty miles away, and my special friend, sat in the supreme court of the United States.

When I knew these men they were as unusual as they ever became: I met many of them later, old and famous, but they were no more brilliant than when they lived in Atchison. Indeed, as younger men, they had qualities missing in age, so although I have always lived in the country, I have not lacked association with the best quality of men.

When Atchison was much smaller than when I knew it first, noted men were frequently seen on its streets. Ben Holliday ran his stages from Atchison to California, and Horace Greeley, Artemus Ward, and many others visited the town and wrote about it. Albert D. Richardson, who wrote one of the best books about the

West, lived there for a time, and one of his children is buried in a cemetery below town.

Men on the way to fame are always at one's elbow. S. C. Pomeroy lived in Atchison in the early days, and his story found its way into Mark Twain's "Gilded Age." Jim Lane United States senator and suicide, was often there: I can stand at the desk where this is written, and throw a stone to the spot where he once made one of his most famous Free States speeches.

A party of Atchison men went out to capture old John Brown, and he captured them. They were swearing men, and he made them say their prayers before he would let them sleep in his camp. They said they knew no prayer except "Now I lay me down to sleep," and Brown made them say that.

In 1859 a new Republican committeeman in Atchison was excited over the coming of a strange speaker. The committeeman knew nothing of the man, but was anxious to get out a crowd to hear him, as he was a lawyer, and candidate for county attorney. So he went among his friends begging them to turn out, as a personal favor. He asked members of the town band to play a piece in front of the church where the speaking was to be, and another inside, to lure the stragglers in, and they agreed, but said they would not stay for the speaking, of which they were tired.

When the night arrived, there was a good audience, and the committeeman practiced a little on oratory in introducing the speaker, who had arrived in a buggy that afternoon.

"We have with us to-night," the committeeman concluded, "a man who brings a message: one whose name is a household word. I have great pleasure in introducing the Honorable ——."

And then he sputtered: he had forgotten the speaker's name. Looking quickly at an envelope in his hand, he completed the sentence:

"The Honorable A. Lincoln."

And then there arose a tall, gaunt man who delivered the speech he afterwards delivered in Cooper Union, New York, and which firmly set his tent on fame's eternal camping ground. Lincoln's speech was delivered the evening of the day John Brown was hanged, and he shook his famous bony finger at the audience, composed largely of southern sympathizers, and said:

"If you secede from the Union, we'll hang you as you hanged John Brown to-day."

Atchison was originally settled by Southerners, but Lincoln charmed them: he was probably at his best when he lived in the country, and country people were his friends. At the close of the speaking many in the audience followed him to his hotel, and sat about in the barroom to hear him talk of the country people he knew in Indiana and Illinois.

Lincoln was driven to Atchison in a buggy from Doniphan by a man named James Nesbitt. Long after, as a reporter, I haunted Nesbitt to hear him talk about his famous passenger. Nesbitt knew Lincoln was a wonder soon after they drove away from the Doniphan hotel, and headed toward Atchison; he remembered

much of his conversation. Nesbitt heard the speech at the Methodist church, and later was in the crowd that surrounded Lincoln in the old Massassoit house until long after midnight; he recalled stories he said Lincoln told that night in the barroom. He quoted Lincoln as saying that his little son once asked him what he said when he proposed to his wife. Lincoln put the boy off, but he persisted, and finally Lincoln replied:

"Well, if you must know what I said when I proposed to your mother, I said yes."

The only paper in Atchison in 1859 was edited by John A. Martin, who later became my competitor. He favored Charles Sumner for the presidency, and did not care for the Illinois upstart whose name was occasionally heard in the same connection. So Martin did not mention the coming of Lincoln in his paper. I have often laughed quietly to myself of a country editor trying to kill off Abraham Lincoln by refusing to give him a "notice."

I had plenty to write about on arriving in Atchison. Slade, the famous outlaw made so much of by Mark Twain, was often there in the early days, being superintendent of one of the roughest divisions of the Ben Holliday stage line, and the older citizens remembered him well. Slade became an outlaw from fighting them. When horses or mules were stolen on the stage line, he was sent for, and not only looked for the thieves, but found them. He had a record of killing thirty-six men, and was finally himself hanged by a vigilance committee. I heard most about Slade from a harness

maker named Clem Rohr, as unusual a man as I have ever known. Some men become educated at school; others from reading newspapers, and others from listening to conversation. Clem Rohr had educated himself by reading newspapers, and his extensive acquaintance helped; everybody called at his shop, the man was so interesting, and knew so much, and what he didn't know, he made up. Bold men of his kind have made history everywhere, and in all times. Once he was elected mayor, and a popular joke was that he had written to a friend that from his residence on a hill he "could see the hole of the town." Many great and intelligent men have been bad spellers: Rupert Hughes proves this fault against George Washington. As for ordinary people, not one in a hundred can write letters, spell all the words correctly, and properly capitalize and punctuate. Clem Rohr told me his father had been one of Napoleon's guard, and was with him in victory and at Waterloo: and I made it history in Atchison.

The richest man in town came to this country from Ireland as a stowaway on a sailing ship. Engineers on the Pennsylvania railroad taught him to read, and later he built a part of that famous line, as well as many miles of railroad in the West. He was one of the most polite, intelligent and agreeable gentlemen I have ever known. People wondered how much he was worth. One day, greatly to my surprise, he showed me his books. The total was enormous, but I have forgotten the figures. Opportunity is not hidden away in schools, but is available everywhere.

A citizen of Atchison when I went there was Robert L. Pease. The first stage company failed, and Pease was in charge until Ben Holliday bought it. On one occasion Indians burned a far-western station, and ran off a lot of stock. Mr. Pease at once sent out a new stage and six mules, in charge of a driver with the curious name of Henry Hank. Somewhere in the Platte valley, a band of mounted Indians appeared. As the road was as level as a floor, and the six mules young, the stage driver soon discovered the Indians could not catch him; so he concluded that he might as well be useful while jogging along. Slowing up his mules a little, he tied the lines about the brake rod, lay back over the stage roof, and began shooting with a repeating rifle at his pursuers. Mr. Pease told me that for months afterwards wounded and dead Indians and ponies were found in that section: Henry Hank actually broke up a marauding gang that had long been a pest to stage drivers as well as to freighters. Robert L. Pease was a quiet, reliable man, and told me with all seriousness that Henry Hank killed or wounded nineteen out of a band of fifty Indians. I believe this is the only western adventure story I ever heard I did not discount a little.

Years ago a famous "Carmen," and singing with the best of the grand opera companies, was Minnie Hauk. Her father was a carpenter in the town of Sumner, three miles below Atchison, and later absorbed by it. In my time she came to give a concert, as some of the older citizens had known her when she was a little

girl, and helped wait on the table in her mother's boarding house. She was married to a Count, and his indignation when almost no one attended the concert, and the presence in the town of a great singer, and her nobleman husband, made a good "item." I tried to get out an audience, but failed, and was so humiliated I did not attend myself.

I became rather chummy with Count Wartegg, in listening to his wails, and thought him a rather insignificant and pitiful little man, but did not meet the Countess. Matt Gerber, the baker, who had known her in the old days, bought a ticket, and told me she had grown quite old and stout. When he introduced himself to her as a friend of her parents, and said he could remember her as a pretty little girl who could sing and play the piano well, she burst into tears.

A popular man named McConnell kept a store which attracted so many gossiping idlers that I went there regularly for news. One visitor every evening was a man named Setleigh, who had been an officer in the English army, and it was said he had wounded himself in the foot to avoid a battle; also, that he was highly connected in England, which his remittance checks indicated. He was a mean and witty talker, and I frequently credited items in *The Globe* to an imaginary paper called *The Evening Set*. Another regular visitor calling earlier at the store was of different type, and a boomer, so I credited his sayings to *The Morning Glory*, as his name was Gloman.

One chief of police was wit and philosopher with a

"natural nose for news," and of great assistance to me. I recall his once saying that the most troublesome spots in town were the negro churches, with their frequent entertainments running until very late hours.

A good-natured milkman called Doc Morrison tipped me to possible social items; if he delivered extra milk or cream at a home, a party or company was indicated, and I looked it up. I trained farmers to bring in items: some of them I gave note books and pencils, that they might jot down names and dates. This help to *The Globe* in that early day is somewhat reflected in 1929, in the sons of some of the men I trained, for everyone around Atchison is still good about giving items.

In getting out a special edition, a professional who had drifted in failed me, and I got it out myself, in addition to my regular work. The edition was historical in nature, and when it appeared, *Printer's Ink* said it was very unusual, as I believe it was, being carefully printed on a flat-bed press, profusely illustrated with half tones, and consisting of so many pages that the mothers of the carriers assisted in its delivery, with the aid of family horses and buggies. Its historical statements are still accepted as history in Atchison, as I had the assistance of many old-timers now dead: one had been a Pony Express rider, and was still called "Pony" when I interviewed him.

A character I got much out of was Sarah Wilkins, an extensive farmer below town: a tall, angular woman who naturally knew about as much as anyone anywhere

ever knew. Once she had a case in the local court, and tried it herself, as she said there wasn't an honest lawyer in town. She talked familiarly with the judge, whom she knew well, in her homely, forceful way, and won. The case was appealed to the supreme court, and she won it there in the same way, although the judges were compelled to ask her to cease smoking a pipe during sessions of the court. When she appeared on the streets of Atchison, Mike Wilkins, her husband, would walk modestly in the rear, carrying a baby they had adopted: they never had any of their own. If she met a man who interested her, she stopped to talk politics or business with him, and her husband waited patiently, and kept the baby quiet, but taking no part in the conversation himself. "Mike," she once said to me, "has always been good to mind." Sarah Wilkins was easily one of the most unusual women I have ever known.

In the early days *The Atchison Globe* had no telegraph news: Jesse James was shot and killed only twenty miles away, and a hated evening rival "scooped us," so we were compelled to make our local news as interesting as possible. Within six months we led in circulation, and maintained it until we had no competitors to wrangle with. We tried to report the most trifling things in an interesting way, and in this I gradually added and trained other reporters, some of whom turned out to be very clever. When the finest home in town was built, the citizens took great interest in it, and we did, reporting almost daily its progress. One citizen expressed the opinion that the foundation

was not high enough, so we began a good-natured campaign to have the house raised, quoting opinions and arguments. The house was an enormous one, built of natural stone, and the result was that the owner obliged us by raising it a foot and a half, all we asked. Little escaped us, although we never went quite so far as the Emporia *Gazette*, which once printed the names and costumes of those attending a large fire at two o'clock in the morning.

I never believed much in political or reform rows, and confined our activities to the ordinary affairs of the people. A German-American citizen once told me his mother had learned English from reading *The Globe*, and after that I was specially anxious to make the contents of the paper suitable for family reading; and the incident happened quite early in my newspaper history.

In the last complete year before this was written, *The Atchison Globe*, now a more important, larger and better paper than I made it, earned only a little more than half the amount it earned for me the last year of my ownership. The explanation is expenses, some of which I would not have believed warranted. I always worked hard myself, and kept expenses down, although I paid one reporter sixty dollars a week, and it was earned.

CHAPTER XVII

After I had been in Atchison seven or eight years, I went abroad with three special friends; a banker, a lawyer, and a wholesale merchant, and discovered that friends do not get along when traveling, for we returned on four different ships.

In London, Alice Meynell, the poet, invited me to her home for dinner, and she must have been ashamed of me. To begin with, I was not familiar with the great distances in London, and, in worrying over the fear of arriving too early, arrived much too late. Another guest was Lady Colin Campbell. I had been greatly awed by London, but the presence at the dinner of a titled woman finished me.

An incident in the life of Ty Cobb has always appealed to me. When he was a pretty fair country ball player, and becoming noted for hitting the ball, his club won the championship, and went to Chicago for the world's Series. In spite of his fame in the country, Mr. Cobb did not make a hit during the games; he was excited, and the harder he tried, the more certainly he missed the ball. I remember having great sympathy for Ty Cobb at the time, since I am also helpless when I wish to be particularly effective. In the old days when *The Atchison Globe* was attracting attention, I did my best work on the dullest days; a circus day, or one offering any other excitement, made me entirely worth-

less. I'm that way now; if anyone is coming to dinner, the day is ruined for me. I cannot help it; I was born that way, and no amount of effort on my part will change it.

At the home of Mrs. Meynell in London, I recall that her little son escaped from his nurse, and, running into the room where I was, said:

"I want to see an American!"

I have since heard a good deal of the prominence of one of Alice Meynell's sons, and possibly this is the one. I sometimes think the English began making fun of Americans because of my mistakes when I accepted Alice Meynell's dinner invitation. If the English base their opinion of Americans on my conduct that night, their scorn is warranted.

On my return from London I learned that my brother Jim and Walt Mason, then employed on the paper, had been criticizing an evangelist named John N. Reynolds, who was holding a revival in a country schoolhouse near town. Reynolds soon called on me, and frankly confessed that what Jim and Walt had charged against him was true, but said he had reformed, and was honestly trying to do better. The man favorably impressed me, and thereafter I sincerely tried to help him. The charge against him, and which he confessed was true, was that he had been a convict in the Iowa penitentiary. I violate no confidence in making this statement, as he later traveled over the country wearing a convict's garb, and sold a book called "Twin Hells," referring not only to his experi-

ence in the Iowa prison, but to a similar experience in Kansas.

For several months Reynolds frequently consulted me, and I rather enjoyed helping a sinner, as I believe most men do. No doubt I gave him too much notoriety, and confess now, long after, that I may have been prompted to this because it was a "joke" on the preachers, with whom I somehow never got along very well anywhere.

Reynolds finally moved to town, and said he intended starting a live stock insurance company, a suggestion which no doubt came into his mind because he was undeniably popular with farmers wherever he went. I strongly advised against this course, telling him that many such organizations went to pieces in a cloud of scandal. But he insisted, and founded his company. Later he established a bank.

Soon the man's methods became dangerous, and the business men of the town came to me in alarm. When I criticized Reynolds' methods, he established a weekly paper, and, in the first issue, violently attacked me. The other two papers joined him in the fight on *The Globe*, and there followed the most disgraceful newspaper row in history. I didn't realize then, as I afterwards came to realize, that I should not have replied to these assaults, but I was young, peppery and foolish, and did what I thought was my best, but which I now realize was my worst. I was very grateful to a newspaper man named Will Owen Jones, of the Lincoln (Nebraska) *Journal*, who said I kept my three

detractors busy, but it would have been a greater favor had he urged me to say nothing.

Reynolds nominated his attorney for the state senate, and elected him, although the other two papers had by this time realized their error, and joined me in opposing him. Two years later, when the attorney came up for reëlection, we agreed not to mention his name, and he was defeated. The power of newspaper silence was illustrated in this incident in a manner so forcible I never forgot it. Reynolds had engaged in similar contests before, and knew that if he could induce the other papers to give him great space, even if abusive, his fortune was made.

Finding that the people would pay no attention to the disreputable facts about Reynolds, I resorted to ridicule. We quit mentioning him in the *Globe*, but issued at night an anonymous weekly, and distributed it free. Its very name was disreputable, and contents worse. Strange as it may seem, this got under his skin, and we soon had him explaining and apologizing. He knew who issued the anonymous weekly, but could not stem its influence, for it only ridiculed him, and with such coarseness that copies now sell at $20 each in Atchison. None of the mushroom papers that sprang up in Paris during the reign of terror were worse. Some of Walt Mason's first verses appeared in it, and I have marveled since that so gentle a poet had so much viciousness in him. Several other smart men around town could not avoid the temptation, and assisted in disgracing the name of Guttenberg.

Finally Reynolds was sent to the Kansas penitentiary for using the mails to defraud, which he plainly and repeatedly did in offering for sale stock in his bank and live stock insurance company. After being released, and traveling about for a time selling his book, he died insane, easily the queerest man I have ever known. Rather good-looking, and brilliant in a way, he might have easily made a success in life.

He did one thing that pleased me: he wrote a letter while still in the penitentiary saying I was a hard man to abuse, as he could get nothing "on" me, which I thought surprising, considering the charges he made. I shall always be grateful to him for saying my associates on *The Globe* were all my friends. He had written to various citizens of Falls City for ammunition to fire at me, and inclosed in his letter replies signed by twelve citizens of Falls City saying my record there was good. Reynolds never took the affair seriously, regarding it as a "joke," but it was very serious to me. One day I visited the penitentiary at Leavenworth, and Reynolds came up out of the mine with a party of convicts. In the best of humor, he waved his hand at me, and said: "Hello, Ed!"

The joy with which many Atchison people received his abuse of me was the most humiliating experience of my life. Men I had never injured in any way, and with whom I was friendly, became violent partisans of Reynolds, and assisted him substantially with money. He imported rough newsboys from Kansas City, and these sold his paper on the streets with vile cries about me.

I pretended I didn't care, but did care enormously. This Reynolds incident was a part of my education; it taught me many things I could have learned in no other way. After Reynolds was dead and gone, you may be sure I was a more careful, a more useful editor. I cannot learn from a suggestion in a book: I must learn from experience and humiliation. Young people believe they are admired because of their youth and promise, but I began to realize, after the Reynolds affair, that young as well as old must earn respect if they have it. There are scars on my heart now because of humiliations in my early years that were unnecessary.

Reynolds attacked me so furiously that he invented charges that disproved themselves. I was at least fortunate in this. Nor did he confine his attacks to me. Two judges of the district court, with their families, were assailed in a way never equaled in viciousness. It was a hornets' nest I might have easily avoided. One of Reynold's special friends was a huge farmer, who, every time he met me, muttered his condemnation. This so incensed me that I put a pistol in my pocket, and told him if he ever spoke to me again, I would kill him. I actually had good luck in this affair, for thereafter the man let me alone. I might have been killed; or killed a man, which is about as bad. I once made up my mind to shoot it out with Reynolds, but when next I met him, he was riding in a buggy with his wife.

Atchison people enjoyed these attacks on me largely because editors are never popular. When I had been

in the town only a year, a lodge voted a gold-headed cane to the most popular editor. I was the newest and most insignificant one, and blush now when I recall it was voted to me over John A. Martin, who had been colonel of a gallant Kansas regiment during the Civil War, and was later twice governor of the State. I often quarreled with him, and am ashamed of that, too, though actually no more to blame than he was. Once the Republicans induced him to accept a nomination for mayor, against his will; but they said, and no doubt he believed, if he would accept there would be no opposition. But there was opposition; I brought out a candidate, a Southerner named Tomlinson, and he was elected.

John A. Martin was a type of man I would not have personally liked had we not been competitors. Early in our differences I regularly called him The Old Grunt, another irreverence of my youth I now regret, and we belonged to "different crowds"; there are always such divisions in a country town. Some other prominent men there I also disliked, and knew they disliked me, but Martin had a successor with whom I got along so well I was able to induce him to get rid of an objectionable editor in his employ.

The manager of the *Champion* who obliged me so much was Luther C. Challiss, as unusual a man as I have known anywhere. He had formerly been a pioneer citizen of Atchison, later going to New York, where he operated successfully as a stock broker during the exciting days of the war. He brought the original

charges against Victoria Woodhull and Tennie C. Claflin, and prosecuted them with such vigor that both women were driven out of the country. I have seen stacks of New York newspaper clippings warranting this statement concerning him. Later he failed completely in New York from being a persistent bull in the gold market, and returned to Atchison when too old to recover. He died there, old, poor and patient, but so remarkable a man that I sincerely respect his memory to this day. John A Martin was related to him, and, on Martin's death, Challiss managed the *Champion* for a time for Mrs. Martin.

One of the last of my evening competitors was S. F. Stambaugh, and so specially my friend that I was able to get through him a summary of his telegraph news, as I had none at the time. This eventually resulted in my securing the Associated Press franchise we have had ever since. Stambaugh had a queer habit of peddling his telegraph news on the street before his paper appeared, and this suggested he might be willing to give me a summary of it daily for a consideration. When he made the arrangement, his paper was very weak, and the money I paid him very agreeable.

I am able to say now with sincerity that John A. Martin was so good a citizen I was compelled to work hard and behave to prevent his ruining me, as he wished to do. Although he hated me, he was one of the strongest influences in my life for good: he wished to ruin me, but really saved me.

I am more peaceable now, as others with scars are,

but young fellows everywhere are looking for wounds with terrible earnestness. I suppose the world learns, but very slowly. I often admit I am a fool: younger men will realize they are fools, too, when they reach my age.

Probably there will never be another newspaper row as vicious as that in Atchison: editors everywhere have finally come to appreciate the damage and disgrace in such affairs. Within a few weeks I have heard of an editor friend who is acting as newspaper arbiter in a big town with three: he receives a large salary for keeping down unnecessary expense and friction in rivalry, and the idea is so good it will undoubtedly be adopted widely.

The Atchison people learned as much as I did from the Reynolds affair. If they at first enjoyed four papers engaged in a fierce row, and a gutter weekly appearing anonymously, they soon tired of it, and have not longed for it since. While the excitement was at its worst, half the men in town carried pistols, and I have seen ten fist-fights in as many minutes. For many years there has been but one paper in Atchison, the one I established with so much turbulence; the people seem as ashamed of that old time as I am.

CHAPTER XVIII

Once when I returned to *The Globe* office from a round on the street, I found the girl at the counter in tears, and instinctively knew what had happened: my brother Jim was dead. For a considerable time he had been living in New Mexico, for the benefit of the climate: a telegram said he had died peacefully and unexpectedly that morning. His sister Sarah Jane was with him, but I do not believe he found any comfort in her, since I knew he did not when they kept house together in Atchison. When they departed for the South, they had a "sale" to dispose of their household effects, and I remember Jim seemed glad to get rid of them, as if living with Sarah Jane had been martyrdom: when anyone bought a bucket, he threw in a pan. He wanted to live with me, where he was always so welcome; but he had a high sense of duty, and cared for Sarah Jane with patience. I recall that he would never permit her to abuse me, as she wanted to do. He always wished I would "make up" with her, which I promised, only asking that our quarrel be allowed to drift until opportunity for reconciliation came naturally. But it only came in Jim's death; and again I could not get along with Sarah Jane. From my earliest recollection she disliked me as cordially as I did her: when I was almost a baby, she took delight in getting me whipped. But I loved Jim so sincerely that I invited her to re-

turn with his body, although I had not spoken to her in many years. When she arrived it was one of the most disagreeable tasks of my life to be civil to her.

Some other of my family relations had been so disagreeable that Jim's love for me was a special solace. My earliest recollection of him is of people gently saying when he did not hear: "Poor fellow, he has consumption." Although he was six years older, I cannot remember the time when I was not the stronger of the two, but he always had the tender regard for me that must have distinguished him when he was teaching me to walk.

My mother was his stepmother, but he was such a good boy that she never had a child of her own dearer to her than the motherless baby which came to her care on her wedding day. Whatever Jim said settled all childish disputes in our family: whatever he said was accepted by my mother as the truth, although she was sometimes compelled to decide against her own children, and all of us were proud when we heard him praised as the best boy in our neighborhood. Sometimes I thought I was as good as Bruce, or Charley, but never thought I was as good as Jim.

I was not more than eleven years old when we moved to town from the farm, and began work in the printing office. I was soon compelled to perform a heavy task every day, or receive a whipping at night, but it was never necessary to give tasks to Jim; he did his best anyway. He went away to work for himself before I did, and we heard the most wonderful reports of how

his employer admired him, all of which were afterwards fully confirmed. Wherever we went, he was distinguished as a good boy or a good man. I learned his industry in time, but never could learn his wonderful patience.

We were in the mountains together, always the same steadfast friends we had been as boys; in all our lives as men we never had a cross word. Finally we went to Atchison together, and started the *Globe*, and I was constantly cheered by the kindest friend a man ever had. I often hear of men who had influences in their lives, and I always think they must have had some such friend as I had in my brother Jim. After we had gone to bed at night, he would figure it out how we were bound to succeed, and was always seeing cheerful visions in the future. I hope it did not occur to him, poor fellow, that in fourteen years he would be dead, and I strong and well.

I never told him face to face how much I loved him, but after he went south the first time, I wrote a letter in which I confessed what I believe he always knew. Indeed, that was his answer; he had always known it, and the subject was never mentioned again by either of us. But when his poor effects came back to me, after his death, I found he had carefully preserved the most sincere love letter I ever wrote. With this letter I have placed the one he wrote me, and put them away as carefully as a mother puts away relics of her dead children. I never had a fault I did not confess to him, yet he was the only friend I ever had

who never found fault with me. Did I deserve the kind things he has said about me I should be the good man he really was.

After the funeral I sent Sarah Jane to look after father, who had made the run into Oklahoma in his old age, and was living on a claim on which I had built a house. But he soon sent her away. He told me later that this was the cause of the trouble:

The first night after her arrival, Sarah Jane noted that father had his bed beside a window, and that he left the curtain up when he retired. She found fault with the arrangement, and he good-naturedly explained that he preferred it that way; that before dropping off to sleep, he liked to look out at the stars and the sky.

When he awoke, he found his window curtain down. At breakfast they talked of the matter again, father saying the curtain was in his room, not hers, and he preferred it up at night, after long experience, and that he could not understand why it so greatly disturbed her peace.

Next morning he again found his window curtain down. This kept up until they finally quarreled violently, and he drove her out of the house. Thereafter I regularly sent her an amount sufficient to pay her living expenses, with distinct understanding that she was not to write to me, as we could not agree in anything. But after a year or so, she began "asserting herself," as she called it: she said my natural duty to her was as great as to a wife, although she was certainly

only a half sister, and possibly no relation at all—I had once heard father intimate her mother was a widow with one child when he married her, and an old citizen of Indiana also told me this was his impression. So she rebelled against my demand that she not write to me, and wrote asking that I buy a lot of cows, that she might start a dairy, which I knew she was no more capable of managing than I was capable of managing a Chinese school. Altogether she angered me as she did father about the curtain, and, after several warnings, I ceased sending the monthly contributions. Thereafter she looked after herself. How well she did it, I do not know, except that I brought her back to Atchison when she died, and buried her beside Jim and father. I think father specially would have resented it, had he been able; I recall his request during his last illness that Sarah Jane be not notified until after his death—he feared she might come to see him.

Father's claim in Oklahoma is now the site of the capital building at Oklahoma City, and was the subject of law suits lasting many years. Once he wrote me he was not well, and believed he would be benefited at Hot Springs, Arkansas; so I sent him there, with my brother Charley to look after him. Later he wrote he was not improving, and would like to come to Atchison. This I also arranged, believing my brother would come with him; but father came alone, and told me later how well the men along the way looked after him. He was almost helpless, but every hour of the journey had the attention of strange men who only knew

he was old and ill. It was a credit to the men I have never forgotten.

On his arrival in Atchison I concluded he would be most comfortable in a small hospital operated by a trained nurse, an elderly woman of long experience. John J. Ingalls, then president of the United States Senate, lived near the hospital, and, knowing father was there, went in one morning to see him. Thereafter he went back several times to visit the weary old man who was dying. Mr. Ingalls frequently told me father was a very unusual man: hard, unforgiving, but very intelligent and interesting.

Soon after the sick man arrived in Atchison, I took a noted specialist to see him. Father asked him abruptly:

"Doctor, what is the matter with me?"

"Do you really want to know?" the doctor replied.

"Certainly," was the answer. "I was brutally treated at Hot Springs by incompetent men. I want to know the truth."

"Well, you have cirrhosis of the liver, and are fatally ill," the doctor replied.

"How long can I live?"

"Not to exceed a month."

"Then I'd like to have it over with. God invented chloroform as a mercy in such cases as mine."

The request was refused, although the sick man plead for pity and mercy, saying he was constantly in great pain. For months he had been unable to lie down, and sat constantly in a chair.

One Sunday morning he seemed more at ease, and, when I called on him, asked to be taken to my home, which I immediately arranged. He sat upright in a carriage, remarked the brightness of the day, and seemed very much better, whereupon I expressed the hope he might get well, but he replied in his hard way:

"O, no; I'm near the end."

He had brought an old accordion with him from Oklahoma, and during the day used it to accompany some of his famous religious songs; I sang several duets with him I had not thought of in many years, and which he had taught me when I was only seven or eight years old.

Knowing he loved music, I sent for two clever sisters of my acquaintance to sing duets for which they were famous. But he did not care for them: he cared only for the songs of his youth.

During the afternoon he told me of an incident in his life that greatly interested me. He arranged to rent his land at Oklahoma City, when too old to look after it himself, and live in the house with the renter and his family. At the time father was old and ill, and almost unable to leave his room. Yet he told me the renter was jealous of him, and had made a great row.

He also talked about religion a good deal that day, saying he was still firm in the faith, but made no suggestions to me concerning the subject. He said the world seemed to be abandoning religion, but that so far as he was personally concerned, doubt had never entered his mind.

At five o'clock in the afternoon he was seized with great pain, and I sent hurriedly for the specialist who had attended him.

"It is death," the doctor said on arrival.

The doctor asked if I had any whisky in the house. Someone had given me a keg of brandy, made at a nearby distillery, and the doctor gave the patient almost a glassful, which he drank greedily, as though he knew its purpose. Then he was given a hypodermic injection in the arm, and, while the doctor was counting his pulse, the sufferer passed to the eternity which I sincerely hope is as pleasant as he thought.

Among his effects I found a statement about his Oklahoma land. He seemed to realize when it was written that death was not far away, and expressed a wish to tell the simple truth concerning the many law suits he had defended. The statement was so powerfully and simply written that it recalled a story of his life he had let me read long before.

I carried it to B. P. Waggener, a noted lawyer in our section, and it impressed him as much as it did me. On one of his trips he gave it to a United States Circuit Judge, who also found great interest in the writing. The result was that these two strong men took an interest in the humble man's case, he had been so wronged by legal machinery badly corrupted. George R. Peck, another noted lawyer, made an argument before the United States Supreme Court, purely because of interest in a very human story. The result of it all was that two Oklahoma lawyers were disbarred, and the

valuable land won. I never profited from it: I gave my interest to my brothers and sisters, some of whom I have never seen. When father died, he was divorced from his last wife, and had been divorced from two others. He once told me his first two wives were good women, but that the others caused him great trouble. He seemed to have had some high notions of honor about his love affairs; he always married the women who greatly attracted his fancy, but was weak in considering the rights of the women he deserted, apparently having an argument about that the world would not accept.

CHAPTER XIX

I CANNOT recall that my father ever exhibited affection for me; I did not seem to suit him in any respect, except that when a boy I was able to assist in his singing. On the preaching trips we rode a horse called "Mex," as it was said to be a Mexican mustang. Father had a saddle, but I rode behind on the animal's bare back; at the rough places, when I held on to him, he seemed to dislike the touch of my hands. The horse had a habit of jumping from under us, when frightened, and then we could not catch him; whereupon we walked to the appointment, and "Mex" returned home. Father became furiously angry on such occasions, calling the horse "abominable" rogue or devil: "abominable" was a favorite word with him, and he frequently applied it to me. Long after I was a man grown I read a confession by Samuel Butler that he never loved his father; before that I had supposed I was the only such wretch that ever lived.

My closest neighbor more than twenty years has been a brother whom I know to be a good man, and who was known as a good boy. He lived at home much longer than I did, and for years I dreaded to talk to him of his recollections as a child, fearing his reply would convict me of having been specially troublesome. But only recently we were working together, and, during a pause to rest, I asked him if father had ever

shown him affection. His reply was a sorrowful negative, and he spoke of many whippings he had received.

Of many such encounters of my own, I cannot recall one for which a child would be whipped now. The whipping I remember most vividly is of taking a visiting boy to a plum patch on Sunday. Father soon appeared, and not only punished Jim and me, but the visitor, and sent him home. The boy left his coat at the house, and went home without it; for weeks it remained there, silent evidence of his resentment. When mother heard of the incident, she cried because our guest had been treated so cruelly. I had not the remotest notion there was anything wrong in going to the plum patch. Dan Lantis, our visitor, was a good boy, and came to visit us Saturday evening, having moved out of the neighborhood some months before, and Jim and I were going after the cows, and talked of Dan, and our longing to see him. We decided to call together: "O-h, D-a-n!" To our amazement and joy, he answered the call! He was just around the turn of the path, and coming to see us! I remember the incident well, and of thinking it was like an answer to prayer.

I told my brother Bruce that day of an incident in family history he had not heard before. At Council Bluffs I was spending the day at home on one occasion, and had gone with father to look at something on the place, when he told me he was writing his autobiography. When I left for town in the evening, he gave me a roll of manuscript, and, after reaching my room, I spent a large part of the night in considering one

of the strangest pieces of writing I have ever read. Could I reproduce it here, I am sure it would interest the reader more than anything I have written, for he wrote as candidly as one thinks, which I have not been able to do.

There were relations of many human attributes new to me. Some of them I had heard of faintly, but thought no one of whatever age ever talked about them, much less wrote about them. I have seen no forbidden book since displaying a greater knowledge of the suppressed human emotions. Many years later, on reading Russian and French masterpieces, they somehow recalled this midnight experience of my youth. Human passion is the same with King or subject, and this common man seemed to have experienced all its phases.

There were moving touches in the story: situations as tragic to this countryman as the retreat from Moscow was to an Emperor. How he had enjoyed, despaired, planned, hoped, suffered! And how regularly his plans went wrong! It moved me more to pity than to indignation. Since beginning this writing I have read of a famous man who stumbled into the difficulty father encountered at Fairview, and, although noted and living in one of the capitals of civilization, could think of no other relief than the countryman did. The remedy failed both men, as it has failed so many others, humble and great.

His analysis of marriage seems wonderful to me now, although mistaken. He referred to the "ownership" of husbands by wives as the most objectionable thing a

man encounters in life. I have found it a mutual burden, little heavier on one side than on the other. I have heard and read many plans of relief, but all were futile. We must bend our backs to it, and be patient.

I lately read two unusual books by an Englishman: "Man, an Indictment," and "Woman, a Vindication." I have never before seen in print an equally frank discussion of sex, and when I seemed familiar with the arguments advanced, it occurred to me I had read them all in father's manuscript, almost sixty years before. The Englishman says men are slowly degenerating because of the increasing domination of women. This was the argument, almost word for word, advanced in father's manuscript, in declaring he had been ruined because of unnatural regulations brought about by women and degenerate males.

Here was a man who had found the grand passion and grand punishment: in his writing he was resentful, defensive. He told bitterly of his wandering, of new enemies and humiliations; plunging into the whirlpool against which he had warned others so long, here were his explanations, and declarations that he still wished to be an honorable man. Once a great land owner and leader in his community, he had been reduced to a ten-acre patch on which he raised vegetables like a peasant. I often think of my mother as having been a martyr in her first and only marriage, and of my father as having been a martyr in his third, fourth and fifth.

There was much in the autobiography of the nobleness of his resolves. With the nobleness and courage

I have noted in all writing, he resolved to return to duty, but with the weakness which distinguishes real human nature, he gradually went deeper into difficulty. A long time ago a writer declared this is the best of all possible worlds. I am disposed to believe it is, and our punishments as mild as we can safely make them.

When I was a little boy, mother was always kind and patient; I do not recall that she ever spoke a cross word to me, but somehow I felt she shared the opinion that I was "abominable." When Jim and I slept in the office she would come occasionally to clean our disordered room. Once she found a package of the Beadle dime novels we early began to read, and knew they were forbidden, from hearing father order us to quit them. We got on our knees, with mock seriousness, to beg her not to tell father, all the time knowing she would not. After that, if she wanted us to carry wood at home, and we were slow about it, she threatened exposure. Again we knew she did not mean it, but we carried in wood with so much enthusiasm she was compelled to tell us to carry some of it out. But I am able to recall but one instance where she displayed real affection for me, and this is the dearest memory of my youth.

When her brother Joe married, he came to our house on his wedding journey, driving a pair of little mules to a farm wagon, and it was arranged that I should accompany him home and visit my grandmother, who lived five miles from his house in the Grand River hills.

Uncle Joe's bride didn't like me very well, and I

didn't stay long at their house; Uncle Joe soon took me over to my grandmother's, who had a son only a little older than I was; a noted hunter, for he had killed wild turkeys.

Nate never did much but hunt, but I was kept pretty busy at home, and greatly enjoyed the vacation. We went hunting every day, but Nate said I had brought him bad luck, for we didn't find any turkeys; nor much else, except a few squirrels. We were the idlest pair of vagabonds in that entire section, and a certain boy living in the same neighborhood caused us a good deal of annoyance. He was a famous good boy named Davis Straight, a distant relation of ours; but we didn't like him, he was so industrious and well-behaved. We were always being told how industrious and worthy Davis Straight was, and wherever we went, we met him on the road driving a wagon loaded with wood; and usually he had a turkey or wild goose on the wagon. He had run into the game accidentally, while at work; we couldn't do it, hunt as hard as we would.

But one day we sneaked up to a little lake in the Grand River bottom, and there sat a wild goose with its head under water poking round for wild celery. I was so anxious to get a goose that I let Nate shoot, though it was my turn. He had an old shotgun, and was a noted shot with it, and while he was taking aim I thought as rapidly as they say a drowning man does; I made up my mind to tell the other boys, when I returned home, that there were two geese, and that I got them both.

Just then there was a muffled report, and Nate fell over on the ground with his fingers in his mouth; the gun had burst, and the goose flew away.

Nate wasn't much hurt, and we started home, carrying the heavy gun, though there weren't enough gunsmiths in the world to do anything with it; it had burst at the breech. We had put in a goose-and-turkey load, and put in too much.

Of course on the way home we met Davis Straight with a load of wood. He had a wild turkey, which he had run into accidentally and shot without any delay; otherwise he wouldn't have stopped. He was such a good boy that he always returned home when expected —or earlier—ready to be put at something else, and shame Nate and me. Davis Straight was my Aunt Beckie's stepson, and I never could understand how she tolerated him.

Having no gun, time didn't pass very rapidly, and Nate and I became quarrelsome; indeed, we came near having a fight one day. So grandmother said it was time for me to go home.

It was forty miles to where I lived through an almost unbroken country, but I was mad at Nate, so struck out to walk home, without bidding him good-by. Grandmother said it was a shame the way we acted, but Nate started it; I remember that.

I left in the afternoon, intending to spend the night at Uncle Joe's, who lived five miles on the way. Aunt Mary wasn't very glad to see me, though she was a bride, but I told her she needn't worry; that I intended

leaving at daylight next morning. Uncle Joe talked of taking me part of the way home in the wagon, saying it was a shame for me to walk home after coming so far to see them, but Aunt Mary soon put a stop to that talk; she seemed to run things around that house. Aunt Mary was a Brassfield, and the Brassfields thought a good deal of themselves; I think they opposed her marrying Uncle Joe in the first place.

I liked the way she talked so little that I got up at daylight, and started without eating any breakfast. Uncle Joe was a good deal exercised about my starting out on foot; he always was the best one in the family. But he couldn't help himself; he was afraid of Aunt Mary, who didn't like me.

I intended stopping that night at George Meek's, a neighbor of ours before we moved to town. That left thirty miles for me to walk from daylight to dark; but I didn't think much of it—before I started, and when I was mad at Nate. There were only a few houses on the way, and the road ran mostly through prairie.

About noon I passed a house and went in, asking for a drink of water, but really hoping they would give me something to eat. They were just sitting down to the table, and the man asked me to eat with them. I thought I must be polite awhile, and said:

"No, thank you."

Unfortunately the man took me at my word, and said, "Well, of course, if you don't want anything, all right, but you're welcome to it."

I sat and watched them eat awhile, and then went

out to the bars and cried because I was such a fool. But I had to make it to George Meek's before dark, as there were panthers in the woods around his place, the big boys said; so I started on my weary way again.

In the middle of the afternoon I passed through the little town called Bancroft, a collection of a dozen houses and a store. When I went into the store the proprietor was eating candied cherries out of a jar. I was hungry, but had no money, and would not beg. The man dropped one of the cherries, and I was just about to dart after it, when he mashed it with his foot. He was the burliest ruffian I ever saw.

The walk nearly killed me, and I dragged myself into George Meek's house about dark. They knew me well, and were surprised when I told them how far I had walked. They offered me food, but I couldn't eat much, and went to bed sick.

The next day I had a high fever, and father was sent for. He came the second day with a horse and buggy, to take me home. I lay down in the bottom of the buggy on a quilt, and father was disposed to grumble because I had made myself sick. When we reached home mother was waiting at the front gate.

"Where's Ed?" she asked anxiously.

For some reason father replied:

"He was too sick to bring home."

Mother turned toward the house hurriedly, to get her bonnet and shawl, and said:

"You needn't put up the horse; I am going right back after him."

There had been so little affection in our family that her saying that made me cry. She heard me sobbing, and came back and took me into the house, where I told her exactly how Nate and Aunt Mary and grandmother had treated me.

CHAPTER XX

I HAVE lived in Atchison from my twenty-fourth to my seventy-fifth year, and it seems to me I have heard of every experience there that may happen to men anywhere. Had I lived in fifty different, widely-separated towns or countries from 1877 to 1929, I do not believe I would have had better opportunity to know life or human nature. In every town there is material for the great American novel so long expected, but no one appears to write it.

If I dared I could tell of three or four happenings in Atchison, and without varying a hair's breadth from the truth, that most readers would characterize as the most surprising they had ever heard. Once I was spending an idle afternoon with a noted dramatic manager who had spent thirty years in looking for unusual situations. I related one of the incidents I refer to, in exchange for some intimate thing he told me. My story, true in every detail within my personal knowledge, startled him: he said he had never heard of anything equally strange.

I am somewhat familiar with the oldest and newest books written by men looking for unusual situations, and have read of nothing as strange as some of the local history I refer to: I have heard nothing like it in the frank conversations of men. I have observed of my sex that there is a candor in their private conversa-

tions with each other that women know nothing about. In such contacts men admit their faults with proper shame, confess they should do better, and frequently do. I have learned much from such intimacies; as much as from any other source. Men of real worth rarely boast; they are disposed to apologize.

I believe that if a French novelist should hear or think of the Atchison incidents I specially refer to, he would reproduce them in a book. In my judgment the startling incidents in "Sapho" actually happened to Alphonse Daudet, the author, or to his intimate friends. The great scenes in books happen; they are not invented. One of the most gripping books ever written is "The Kreutzer Sonata," and nothing will ever convince me Tolstoy made it up; he lived many of the incidents, and knew the others to be true. There is one specially big situation in the book I have known in Atchison. When I read "Kreutzer Sonata," I lost another of my illusions: I believed I was the only one in the world who knew a certain thing, and here was a man who had told about it in a book almost before I was born. The human story is much alike in every clime and every age. In my home town I have known people as good, or better, and as bad, or worse, than I have heard of elsewhere.

It seems to me the brightest man I have ever known lived in Atchison when I went there in 1877; and I have known no other to sink to the depths of degradation he did. Yet for a long time he was the most popular citizen of the town; one of the best husbands, and be-

came one of the worst. I do not attempt to explain him, but can give his explanation. When he was in the lowest depth of degradation, I was so sincerely fond of the man that I went to see him, and found him as fair, genial and witty as he ever was. I was the only citizen of Atchison he would admit to his presence, and was frequently sent by his wife, father and mother to attempt to straighten out certain of his affairs. One day when I expressed my great regret at his terrible situation, he said:

"It is inevitable; I could not have been a decent man."

Never before had I heard a man say so dreadful a thing, and the statement wasn't true, but he pretended to believe it when so near his grave he could almost see men digging it. I have never believed in men fooling themselves, and have long marveled that so many do it. He died soon after, and, when he was buried, I was the only one who stood beside his grave, outside of the undertaker and his assistant. And he had once been the most popular citizen of his town.

On the other hand, I believe the best man I have ever known once lived in Atchison; he was as well behaved and gentle as a good woman, and in addition had manly strength to successfully meet the battles of life. When he was buried he was paid a compliment unequaled, so far as I know, in pathetic beauty. The man had been married twice, and the mother of his first wife was living at the age of eighty, the day of his funeral. Her infirmities were so great she could not

attend, so she put on her best dress, and sat alone while the body was carried to the grave, weeping softly in memory of a good man. No incident in a book ever effected me as much.

In Atchison I knew a man and his wife who hadn't spoken to each other in fifteen years, although they lived in the same house. During the fifteen years four children were born to them. And the father and mother, and the children born under such strange circumstances, were excellent people.

So little that was really exciting happened in my life as a boy that I was greatly interested in Jim and Dan Ayers, who ran a restaurant in Atchison. Something really happened to them; I never before heard of boys going anywhere and finding excitement as great as they expected. When they were boys they lived on a farm in Virginia; I have heard them say their post-office was Sudley Springs. One morning their father started them to Sunday school, and after they had loitered along the way a mile or two, Jim Ayers remarked a commotion over beyond what they called the Big Woods.

"What's that?" Jim asked, stopping.

It was getting late by this time, and Dan replied:

"I don't know, but we'd better hurry to Sunday school, or we'll get a whipping."

When they hurried on, the commotion over beyond the Big Woods broke out again, faintly, but it was very unusual, and Jim stopped and listened. He had never heard anything like it before, although he was

a big boy twelve years old, and, after listening awhile, said:

"I'm going over there."

"Better not," Dan said. "You know father whips hard."

But the strange commotion continued, so Jim said he was going, whipping or no whipping. Dan followed, but kept saying they would catch it when they returned home.

They walked, and walked, and walked, all the time the commotion over beyond the Big Woods becoming more pronounced: but they couldn't tell what it was. They forded streams, and were chased by strange dogs, but kept on; from ten o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon. They had nothing to eat, and they didn't know that they could ever find their way back, because they were in a country strange to them. A little after four o'clock, as a reward for their perseverance, they walked into the battle of Bull Run.

A patron of the Ayers restaurant, becoming angry, financed John and Tom Eglinger, Ayers employes, to start a rival establishment next door. The fight between the two restaurants lasted for years, and was the most exciting thing in town. Weber & Fields came to Atchison once, and after the show Pete Dailey and Lillian Russell, going into Eglinger's, were able to buy roasted wild ducks at fifteen cents each. They ate four, and, as a joke, Pete Dailey said to John Eglinger that he should be given four for a half dollar. John was awed by the big show people, anyway, and agreed to

the reduction, whereupon Dailey laughed, and gave him a tip of a dollar.

Wild ducks were very plentiful and cheap in Atchison in that day. Near town was a lake, and one stormy evening late in the fall Columbus Keene and his son Ben, who lived on the lake shore, noted that a great number of wild ducks had bunched in the center. They rowed out quietly, and each fired twice. They declared they picked up eighty-nine. Long after the incident I said to Columbus Keene:

"Hunting stories are always grossly exaggerated, and since you got plenty, tell me truthfully: How many did you get? Let me once hear a true hunting story."

He always stuck to eighty-nine, as did his son Ben. I could never get any other story out of them, and have always believed it.

In spite of their low prices, the Eglingers made a fortune. But they worked hard: Tom twelve hours during the day, and John twelve hours at night. They kept this up for years without a vacation. Finally they were worn out, and found a buyer. The new man took over a popular, famous and prosperous place, but failed in a few months, because he managed it in the shiftless way most western restaurants are managed. Shiftlessness is the curse of the West.

In the early days Atchison had a citizen named Gabe Wade, who hauled freight to Denver with five yoke of oxen attached to a heavy wagon. One of his oxen died somewhere on the plains, and Gabe found he

could not get along without another. So he lassoed a buffalo, trained it to work after considerable difficulty, and proceeded to Denver. By the time he returned to Atchison the buffalo was as reliable as any other work animal. Gabe Wade made several other trips to Denver with the buffalo. Later it became hog fat, and was finally sold to a committee preparing a barbecue to celebrate the opening of another railroad to the town.

An Atchison man called Doc Shields attended a public dance without his wife; and, what is more, his wife was at home sick—so sick that the neighbor women were compelled to go in and sit with her. The women at the ball knew Mrs. Shields had been poorly several months, and did not welcome Doc; but a spinster who was quite old and plain accepted an invitation to dance with him. While they were engaged in a waltz his partner thought it polite to inquire about Mrs. Shields, so she asked: "Mr. Shields, how is your wife?" Doc was not a real doctor; he was called that because he once bought a drug store, and failed; and as he whirled in the dance Doc replied to the question about the condition of his wife: "She is a very sick woman. I don't believe she'll live till morning."

In the Missouri hills east of town there were farmers in the early days who ate pork meat and hot biscuits three times a day. A son of one of them went to Kansas City to work in the stockyards, but became ill, and was brought home. His grandmother, after looking at him, said: "He has been eating light bread." So they gave

him hot biscuits and pork meat three times a day, and he recovered.

Many years ago a man named Jerry Shackelford lived in a lonely house in the woods near town. His wife asked him one afternoon to get an armful of oven wood; she was baking, and wanted wood to heat the oven of the cookstove to best advantage. But he delayed going, and his wife finally spoke to him sharply, as her bread was ready to bake. Jerry was very sensitive, and the reproof made him so mad that he went out of the house, and for fifteen years nothing was heard of him. His wife continued living in the old house, and the neighbors told the story of the runaway in whispers. One cold, blustery night, as Mrs. Shackelford sat with her feet in the oven of the cookstove, to keep them warm, the front door opened, and Jerry walked in, carrying an armful of oven wood, which he deposited in the wood box behind the cookstove. Mrs. Shackelford was glad to see her husband, and welcomed the chance to make up, but she thought she should in some way indicate that his long absence had been unusual and improper, so she said: "Well, I will say you have been a long time about it." That made Jerry mad again, he was so sensitive, so he went out of the house, and has not been heard of from that day to this.

Long ago I knew a beautiful woman delicately reared; I have read of no woman in books who seemed superior to her in culture or the womanly graces. It was said of her she had never had her hands in dish-

water, and never cooked a meal. For years she lived with an indulgent uncle, always taken care of, always the subject of compliments, and always deserving the compliments, as had been the case when she lived in her father's house. When her uncle died, she was a problem for a time, but soon married an elderly man who again gave her every comfort and idleness. I have no doubt she made her husband happy; I have heard him say she did, and praise her extravagantly. We heard he was rich, but apparently his was a rumor-fortune, for he had little when he died in a distant place. The end of the story is that his widow literally starved to death, she was so proud and ill-fitted to care for herself.

The largest private library I have been familiar with was owned by a man who knew almost nothing of the contents of the books on his shelves, yet his fame had spread over many states, and he was exceedingly popular and effective as a citizen. I never knew a more interesting man to spend an evening with; of ancient men he knew nothing, but of modern men, everything.

"What is literature?" he once asked me, "I have been too busy to find out."

I was a poor teacher, but, so far as I knew it, told him the history of the world, and he seemed never to have seriously thought of the subject. He kept asking for more until a late hour, when I said:

"Except the quarreling, there isn't any more."

I was astounded myself to realize that one may briefly summarize all there is to know in an hour or two. I picked out half a dozen books from his shelves, and

said they covered the entire subject. Later I asked if he had read them, and he replied he had been too busy, but he long marveled that I had been able to "pick up" so much. I marveled that he had "picked up" so little, since I frequently recommended to him a single book giving a suggestion of everything that has happened in the past; and it is so well and simply written that I found it more interesting than a novel. With such a base, one may daily enlarge and correct the story of mankind from conversation, and reading newspapers and magazines; I have always believed an education of a sort is as naturally and pleasantly acquired as dyspepsia. But I suppose no one realizes the great number of strong men who get along well without knowing much about literature; in the same town there was a teacher of the subject who was quite poor, and almost unknown. This professor once surprised me by saying that while he was a graduate of a famous university, the uneducated man referred to above was the better educated.

I knew an excellent woman who had this curious history: As a girl she long went with a young man, and claimed to be engaged to him, but he kept putting off marriage. Finally she induced him to agree on a date, or set one herself, and extensive arrangements for the marriage were made by her family. When the evening arrived, the proposed bridegroom did not appear. After a proper period of indignation and humiliation, the proposed bride took the man's name, moved to a distant place in the West, and was for forty years

known as his widow. I have never met a woman who disliked men more cordially.

I once knew two elderly bachelors who lived in apartments, and they told and verified this story in so many ways that I believed it: A pastor of the town frequently called on them, drank liberally of their liquor, and boasted of amours with women of his congregation. The stories were generally believed to be untrue; mere drunken boasts. The pastor later resigned his position, after a series of newspaper exposures, and in a few weeks was called to the pulpit of another church in the same town. The congregation which gave him the second call later disbanded, and is now without church property or existence.

CHAPTER XXI

In the eighties I frequently went with railroad officials into the West, then rapidly developing. Now it has almost reached the point of saturation, and is taking good care of those who have used fair intelligence in trusting it. I lately traveled in a motor car from my home on the Missouri river far into the Rocky Mountains, and found prosperity all the way. There is no longer any West, in the old sense. When I was a young man, a trip into the West meant strange adventure: now it means wide spaces and railroad stations farther apart, but always comfort and civilization.

There is nothing in the theory that rainfall is slowly extending westward: no change has been marked within the knowledge of men. When I went to Atchison a half century ago, I found plenty of hard maple trees, and sugar produced within a few miles of the town. Sugar trees are not grown in Topeka, the capital, sixty miles away. Eastern Kansas is as fine as any section of Missouri, Illinois or Iowa. A hundred miles west, a marked change begins: less rainfall, and a different soil. Two hundred miles west, there is another change. Eastern Kansas is no more like western Kansas than it is like Arizona.

Several years ago the governor of a Southern state was my guest, and I showed him forty miles of the section in which I live, in a motor car. I recall his

continually remarking that there was not the slightest evidence of poverty in town or country. Except for a short time in boyhood, when I roamed over the extreme west, and was not observing, I have always lived where living conditions were easy. I have known few poor people, and the few I have known might have easily been better off. This experience has colored my life: I believe to-day that poverty is largely unnecessary, except in cases of old age or unavoidable illness.

Curiously enough, the most pronounced poverty I have ever seen was in my own state. In an early day I went to western Kansas with a party of railroad officials, to see about the distribution of free seed wheat, crops having failed again. In driving about, I saw real poverty for the first time in my life. I wrote something about it, and the people out there growled at me for years, saying I had made their condition worse than it was, and that they were "getting along."

In that section I first heard the story of an unusually stubborn man: a merchant in a little settlement where the railroad paused some years, owing to hot winds and dry weather. Being capable and intelligent, he built up a large business, as settlers drove long distances to patronize him. The railroad officials and owners were his intimate friends and frequent visitors, and when they at last decided to extend the line on west, the merchant was indignant: he felt he was not being treated right. So when a new station was opened, he closed his store with its $25,000 stock of goods, and never again opened it: as curious a sight as I have ever

seen was this store after it had been turned over to dust and decay for twenty years—everything old-fashioned, and falling to pieces.

On one of these trips I went beyond the railroad with the J. P. Pomeroy mentioned elsewhere, to a town where he had interests. The citizens believed his visit was somehow connected with extending the railroad to their town, and they got out the band, and made much of him, although he told them his visit had no connection with railroad extension: the line was insolvent as it was. That was more than forty years ago, and the line has not yet been extended: the amount of booming wasted in the United States, particularly in the western half, is astounding.

I shall always vividly remember the Western Kansas towns of the early days. There was something about the land agents, the hotel keepers, the editors, the citizens, the farms, the houses, that was unforgettable. No writer has ever correctly described the West of that day; it cannot be done with ink and paper, or brush and canvas. I have it all in my memory, but cannot convey it to others. No one actually knows about things he has only read about: I know as much about the battle of Waterloo as Victor Hugo, who wrote about it—only the man who was there knew the real story.

I found the people hopeful and cheerful, if very poor. One man was so witty I have always remembered him: and his wit was displayed in telling about the poverty of himself and neighbors. One of his exaggerations was that the people were so poor they had no

postage stamps, so when they wanted to write back home, advising their friends to join them in what they called "God's country," they pinned a side of bacon to the letter, and it went through. This was possible, the wag said, because the hogs were so thin, owing to lack of food, that a side of bacon was no thicker than a postage stamp. Crowds of people collected about the man, and laughed at his hard-time stories.

In this section great dust storms once raged, and I have never seen them described in print as well as old settlers have described them to me. Farmers who attempted to go to town were lost, and rescue parties organized, the men roping themselves together, as is done in the Alps. Houses were obliterated as in blizzards accompanied with snow. There was much suffering, and many lives lost: no more thrilling stories of adventure come out of any other part of the world. The settlers lived from the sale of buffalo bones, everywhere bleaching on the prairies, and for which there was fortunately a market in the East. Their only fuel was buffalo chips, and occasionally they were subjects of Aid campaigns, some of which later resulted in the rise and fall of statesmen.

Through it all were Indian alarms and raids. In one of these fifty Kansas farmers lately returned from the Civil War engaged in a fight with Indians more remarkable than any other I know in the border wars. Surrounded for days on a little island on the Arikaree fork of the Republican river, they withstood repeated assaults from great bodies of well-armed Indians; and

the records of the Kansas State Historical Society soberly state that they killed or wounded more than seven hundred of them. The Indians knew there were only fifty white men on the island in the dry river, and five hundred mounted warriors charged them on horseback, intending to ride down the little party they thought at their mercy.

"Wait! Wait!" the white captain, who was badly wounded in the knee, kept saying to his men.

"Bill," the captain said later, "you take the chief," who was conspicuous because of his size, and the fine horse he rode. When the Indians came within a hundred feet of the line, there was a volley, and forty horses were riderless, including that of the chief, set apart for Bill, known as a dead shot. The firing continued rapidly and effectively, and the charge was broken.

On a not distant hillside the Kansas farmers plainly saw the line reform, and heard the wailing, for they had killed a great chief. The second charge was led by a medicine man the Indians believed invulnerable to the bullets of white men. As the Indians approached the second time, the white captain again kept saying to his men:

"Wait! Wait!"

Again he said to Bill, "You take the chief."

Then there was a volley; again the chief fell from his horse dead, with many of his companions, and again the charge was broken.

The brave little band of fifty had many killed and wounded, and almost starved during the repeated as-

saults, but in the end the Indians retired. The captain in charge of the gallant fifty was a regular army man named Forsythe, detailed by General Phil. Sheridan. A lieutenant in the party was also from the regular army, a nephew of Henry Ward Beecher, and was killed early in the fighting.

On the trip with Pomeroy, we employed a liveryman to drive us to the end of the railroad at Stockton, near which town we encountered the poorest team I had ever seen. The driver was collecting wood along the banks of a depression called a creek, although it was entirely dry: in that section there is a county without a single stream of running water. The team, the wagon, the scanty wood on the wagon, were so forlorn that I offered to bet Pomeroy, who was an aristocrat, that the driver was related to me. Pomeroy was very fond of his Boston ancestry, and I was always shocking him by telling how different mine was. He was amused, but soon forgot the incident.

I knew my Aunt Sarah lived on a farm near Stockton, and we had arranged to drive out to see her, as we were to spend an entire day in the town. Next morning Pomeroy, usually a late sleeper, was up early, eager to make the drive out to see my Aunt Sarah, I had told him so much about her.

Five or six miles out, in the barren hills, and after we had crossed a river without a drop of water in it, we met a farm wagon being driven to town by a big boy. On the front seat with him was my Aunt Sarah.

She was greatly changed; I had seen her last as a pretty young woman, the bride of a soldier lately returned from the war, and now she had grandchildren. But I knew her, and she knew me. The big boy at her side was her son George. I proposed that if he would drive Pomeroy back to town I would drive the wagon, and visit with Aunt Sarah on the way, which arrangement was agreed to.

In the rear seat of the wagon were two neighbor women, sitting on split bottom chairs, but Aunt Sarah did not introduce them to me. George and Pomeroy soon disappeared in a cloud of dust with the livery team, and I drove slowly along, braking the heavy wagon when we encountered the hills. At our feet were a lot of crocks and tin buckets.

"Butter and eggs for the stores in town?" I asked.

She said the crocks and tin buckets contained butter and eggs, but they were for her daughter Lucy, who lived in Stockton. On arriving there, she directed me to drive down by the railroad station, and in a little frame house her daughter lived. Lucy was married, and had a baby. After visiting awhile with my new-found relative, I was anxious to go up town, but my cousin insisted that I remain until her husband returned. He had heard of me, she said, and would be disappointed if he did not meet me.

"Here he is now," she said presently: "he has just driven up."

And then there stalked into the room the man we had

met the afternoon before on Deer Creek, and who, as I had predicted, was related to me: he had married my cousin.

Pomeroy, when he heard the story, was greatly amused, but would not believe it until I took him to see the man.

Forty years later I was in a Pullman smoking room, and engaged in conversation with the only other occupant, a man who lived at Stockton. My fellow traveler had known Aunt Sarah, and told me that my cousin Lucy's husband died when she was only nineteen years old, and that later she married a man of great wealth in California. How the wheel of fortune turns!

CHAPTER XXII

Although *The Atchison Globe* has no opposition now, and has not had in many years, for a long time the people of the town had a notion that two papers were necessary, and as often as I killed off a rival, they aided a new man to come in. Over and over I caught special friends at this; one even bought the failing opposition paper himself, and tried to run me out. After I became old, I discovered many things about friendship I did not realize before, but this is not said with bitterness; probably my friends have been as faithful to me as I have been to them. In studying others I discover a good many faults of my own.

I once heard an editor say an honest newspaper is impossible, there is so much natural opposition to honest measures. I believe the most worthy and useful paper I ever knew had most bitter enemies, most of them among excellent citizens. An editor's rivals found public sentiment against him, and his natural excuses are never fairly considered. There is always demand for a campaign of abuse against an editor, particularly if he is successful. The great weakness of newspapers is the people have too much voice in their management; many objectionable things appear in them because editors are not permitted to use their own judgment.

One of the frequent campaigns of abuse against *The Atchison Globe* resulted in the greatest compliment ever

paid me, and since I have freely acknowledged my faults, I beg the reader's indulgence for mentioning this credit.

Several years ago two men bought the Atchison *Champion* for a few hundred dollars, its fortunes were so low. I had it killed off several times, and for a month or more it had appeared as a weekly, only the date line being changed: "to preserve the franchise," the owner said.

The new owners made a vigorous attempt to revive it. The vigor they decided on was mainly abuse of me, and this course was advised by one of my best friends, I later discovered. I had lived in the town a long time, and accumulated enemies, some of them creditable; for there is such a thing as creditable enemies. One of the men who thus looked up my record was J. E. House, now a feature writer for the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, so this competitor was no weakling. His partner was Ewing Herbert, long a prominent Western editor, and also a man of ability. There were other capable writers on the paper, but these two especially gave the world the details of my private life.

I paid no attention to it—I had finally learned that lesson—but worked hard to get out every day as good a paper as I could. My opponents had somehow induced the local Catholic church to boycott me, and priests rode about to charges in the vicinity ordering Catholics to quit taking my paper; our carriers who were Catholics were ordered to sell their routes at a sacrifice, and quit. And this was my offending: It was reported in

the papers that the wounds of an image kept in a distant church had started bleeding, and I said people no longer believed such tales.

At the end of three months I was waiting around the office one evening for the opposition paper to be thrown in, and see what new atrocity had been charged against me. When it came, I found that Messrs. House and Herbert had jointly signed a valedictory editorial announcing that the paper would be suspended that day. And then followed the most complimentary reference ever made to me.

A good many citizens of Atchison, they said, had called them into dark stairways to tell dark tales about me, but careful investigation revealed that none of them was true; and Messrs. House and Herbert added that not one of the tale bearers was as good a citizen as they believed me to be.

Here was evidence from rival editors that I stood fairly well with my fellow citizens, after long association; and there is no higher commendation for a man. Both men have since written that they assailed me in the hope of drawing my fire, and thus advertise their efforts at opposition, but that in investigating the tales borne to them by my enemies, they found nothing more serious than is true, alas, of any man who lives, works, hungers, and has opposition in all his affairs.

The House-Herbert editorial is reasonable evidence that I had behaved fairly well up to the time of its appearance. As to my conduct since that time, I offer this:

On the 29th of April, 1927, I was given a dinner in New York. Bruce Barton, who has written two religious books of great fame, told me, and afterwards wrote, that the assembly was as good a showing of notables as he had ever seen in the big town. On the morning of the 30th, New York papers estimated the attendance at two hundred men and women. J. E. House, one of the signers of the editorial mentioned above, was at the speakers' table, and Mr. Herbert wrote for his newspaper a long and friendly reference to the compliment that had been paid me so far from home.

I was given a Gruen Fiftieth Anniversary watch, Cyrus H. K. Curtis making the presentation speech. The watch was inscribed as follows:

"Presented to E. W. Howe by admiring friends to commemorate his fifty years of inspiring service in American journalism. April 29, 1927."

In the same year the Commercial club of Atchison, aided by all the Civic clubs, gave a dinner in honor of my fiftieth anniversary. Three hundred attended, and many could not be accommodated. William Allen White made a talk, and said it was the finest compliment ever paid a country editor: it is at least true no other citizen of Atchison has been honored in an equally generous way. The Kansas City *Journal* next day, in its notice of the dinner, said every minister in town was present.

The men who managed the New York and Atchison dinners, the men and women who attended, and the

writers of the House-Herbert editorial, will never know how much they pleased me. We all carry scars from childhood on our hearts as well as on our fingers and toes, and of all the incidents of my life, the three referred to above have helped me most in trying to forget disturbing memories; so I have requested that newspaper notices of the Atchison and New York dinners, and a copy of the House-Herbert editorial, be placed in my grave, as evidence to my future judge, if I have one, that I lived among my fellow men with reasonable uprightness. I have blundered, and been humiliated for many minor discrepancies, but in the higher walks of misconduct, I am proud and grateful that such witnesses testify my average has been reasonably good.

CHAPTER XXIII

So far as I am widely known, it is due to "The Story of a Country Town." Before a majority of the people of to-day were born, I believe I may say with reasonable modesty that this novel was famous, and has been selling somewhat ever since. Within a few months a Memorial edition has been issued by noted publishers, with pictures by a noted illustrator. I have received more than eighty semiannual royalty payments on the book.

I am disposed to believe, now that I am willing to appraise myself candidly, that such natural ability as I have in writing is not inclined toward the novel form: I have tried it several times, and failed, unless it may be said that I succeeded in the first attempt.

Occasionally I meet people who have "heard of me"; more frequently I am introduced to persons as "the famous Ed. Howe," and realize that the persons so addressed have not heard of me. I suffer so keenly in this way when I am introduced that I prefer it be said, simply: "Shake hands with Mr. Howe," the favorite American form. Such fame as I have has not been, on the whole, very enjoyable: my admirers usually add a sting more depressing than their compliment is invigorating. No one really knows what abuse is unless he has attracted a little attention. How generously the unknown are complimented as The People! I think I

have never had a friend who did not tell me occasionally how others disliked me because of my writing.

The most uncomfortable experience I ever had was the result of attention once paid me in London; kindly intended, but I was not able to gracefully accept it. When anyone hears of me, I wish he might first hear that I stand fairly well at home, where I have lived fifty years: elsewhere I have put down in this writing, with tears in my eyes and gratitude in my heart, that some creditable attention has been paid me there.

The original copyright of "The Story of a Country Town" was issued in 1882. Probably I began writing and worrying over it about that time, although I have no accurate dates in anything; I did not know the year I was born until my brother Bruce appeared in Atchison twenty-four years ago. He had preserved that leaf from our family Bible which records our ages, in father's writing, as my brother left home many years after I did. This said I was born May 3, 1853. When quite young I claimed to be older than I was, as I was "old for my age," as people said in that day. I "went with" girls much older, and this embarrassed them, so I added several years; I wanted to be considered a man when almost a boy. In course of time I attempted to get back to my real age, but, in trying to tell the truth, was a little too liberal with myself, as one is apt to be; so I said I was born in 1854. "Who's Who in America" gives that date; I have tried to correct it in new editions, but for some reason the publisher did not make

the change. A few days before he died my father told me I was born in 1855. I have no disposition to be known as younger than I am; not because I specially love the truth, but because anyone attempting to deceive in such a way only attracts ridicule. We easily know the ages of each other.

When I believed the manuscript ready for a publisher, it was sent to one of the leaders in publishing of that day, and returned. Then it was sent to six or seven others, with like result, whereupon I decided to print it myself, as there was a job office attached to my newspaper plant. The type was set by a man named Kelley, with whom I had worked as a printer long before in various towns in the West. I recall that Kelley was an old soldier, but not much of a fighter, as he often told me he played a horn in the regimental band. As Kelley set the type, the printing was done, four pages at a time, on a medium Gordon job press. A thousand copies were run off, and when the sheets were ready, a local bindery bound them in cases purchased in St. Louis. The type used was minion, specially purchased for the purpose. No real book is printed in minion; it is too small. This first edition now has considerable value. I know that Julian Street and George Barr McCutcheon paid ten dollars each for copies several years ago, and the price is now higher.

About that time an old actor named Barney McAuley came to the local theater with a play called "The Messenger from Jervis Section," and I sent him a copy of the book. When he returned to New York, it was

given to a man named H. G. Crickmore, employed on the *World*. I heard that Crickmore was really the horse editor, with strong disposition toward books and plays, and a noted First Nighter. The first notice of the book was written by Crickmore, so far as I know, and was as favorable as such a notice could be. Indeed, he went so far as to say it might be the Great American Novel turning up unexpectedly from a totally unknown man. I realize now that the "Story" did not meet Crickmore's generous expectations.

I had sent copies for review to other eastern papers, and about this time began hearing from them. The book almost never had a bad notice in that early day; probably the newspapers were specially kind because of its modest dress. I recall a Philadelphia writer who gave it a full page, which pleased me so much that I wrote him a foolish letter, and this he printed, greatly to my humiliation.

I had also sent copies to W. D. Howells and Mark Twain, both of whom I specially admired: the first because of "A Modern Instance," and the second because of "Roughing It," both newspaper stories. Soon after I received enthusiastic letters from them, and Mr. Howells reviewed it with great favor in the *Century*. Mark Twain wrote: "I believe this is the first time I have ever furnished an opinion about a book, but like 'The Story of a Country Town' so much that I am glad of a chance to say so. Your style is so simple, sincere, direct, and at the same time so clear and so strong, that I think it must have been born to you, not made.

Your picture of the arid village life is vivid, and what is more, true. I know, for I have seen and lived it all." The letter was written with pencil, and included several sheets marked "Private," which gave me wholesome advice about writing. Mr. Howells also wrote in equally friendly strain. I remember that both advised me not to rush too hastily into print with another book, which advice I neglected, and the second made a complete failure. Later I wrote a better one, but there was so much disappointment with the second that the third did not get a hearing. Unhappily copies of both these stories are still in existence, and frequently I am humiliated by hearing them mentioned.

The favorable reception of the job press edition of "The Story" caused all those publishers who had rejected the manuscript to offer to accept it. "Our records show," one of them wrote, "that we rejected the manuscript; but alas, we are all liable to err."

I closed with the first offer, which was from James R. Osgood, who failed in a few months. His business was taken over by Ticknor & Co., who paid me the considerable royalty due from Osgood. I have letters from Henry Holt and A. W. Wagnalls, both now dead, saying they discharged readers for returning my manuscript without sending it higher up for further consideration.

Those firms which sent the original manuscript back, later offered to take it, or actually printed the book, included Scribner, Harpers, Funk & Wagnalls, Houghton Mifflin, Henry Holt, and Osgood. A. W. Wagnalls,

of Funk & Wagnalls and the *Literary Digest*, was an editor, city clerk and Lutheran preacher in Atchison before my time.

Barney McAuley once told me Fanny Davenport wanted a play made from the "Story," in which she would appear as "Mateel," with McAuley as "Big Adam." Mark Twain also strongly recommended a play, with more made of "Big Adam." Many years later I tried the play myself, and it was presented nine performances by a stock company. Audiences increased every night, and although I sent printed copies to several New York managers, they evidently considered it very bad, since none of them replied. I wrote the play hurriedly and wretchedly, I am sure, but it is the truth that the play met with great success at nine performances. I was treated better about the book than I expected, but disappointed about the play. "Sport" North, owner of the stock company, played "Big Adam," which I had greatly enlarged, and he told me that in his long experience as an actor he had not received equal favor in a part. I shall always believe the play had several big scenes. The week of seven night performances and two matinees brought in more money than any other play in the history of the company. W. D. Howells heard of the stage performances, and, recalling Mark Twain's suggestion about it, wrote me. I sent him a copy of the play, with the ending changed into a happy one, but evidently it did not please him, for he made no comment.

While writing the story, I had little children, lov-

able and noisy, and it was my custom to retire for quiet to the kitchen of the house where I still live, after a hard day on the newspaper. So far as I am able to recall, every line of the book was written at night.

The publishers to whom I offered the manuscript were the book's first critics; I did not read it to friends. I attempted this with my brother Jim, whom I considered an excellent writer, and the result was so discouraging that I did not attempt it again. He came over to my house one evening, and I began with the title: "The Story of a Country Town."

"In the first place," he said, "the title is not grammatical. It should be 'A Story of a Country Town.'"

We wrangled over that awhile, and he went home without hearing a word of the book beyond its title. He has long been dead, but lived long enough to tell me that my recollections of our neighbors in Fairview were not accurate. He was six years older than I, and said the Fairview people were about an average of country people on the frontier.

So far as that goes, I considered the book a novel, and did not aim at accuracy. There never was a "Mateel Shepherd," a "Clinton Bragg," or a "Jo Erring," although I had an uncle named Joe Irwin, who lived at our house when I was a boy. He was seven years older, and I greatly admired him, but he did not marry until long after we both left Fairview. My father was actually a farmer and preacher, and bought a weekly paper in the county seat, which he named *The Union of States;* but the book is mainly fiction, and so in-

tended. Fairview had no mill, and no tragedy. I used incidents in the life of my father somewhat freely in "John Westlock," but he did not return at night to confess his sins over the coffin of his deserted wife, nor did he disappear forever in a blinding snow storm. What he thought of the book I never knew.

There was a learned woman school teacher in our town to whom I also applied for criticism, but she tore it to pieces so completely that I soon quarreled with her; and since I have purposely violated many of her strict rules, in the interest of brevity and clearness. When I write I think I should have something to say as to the form of it, and will take many liberties the learned will not indorse. And this woman was learned; although she never went beyond the high school in Atchison, I believe her to be the best educated person I ever knew. She reminded me, however, somewhat of Buddha. Once when in Ceylon, a native guide was explaining to me the severe doctrines of his prophet. "Buddha, he too particular," the guide concluded.

My only daughter was born after the appearance of the book, and named "Mateel." I once heard a French woman pronounce the word "Mathilde," and made it into "Mateel." The name is now quite common: I saw a book the other day entitled "Sunny Mateel," and meet with women of that name wherever I go. I long believed I invented the word, but one of the famous New York fault finders said recently I did not. Another said I did, so I now have no opinion of my own on the subject. My daughter is not at all like the

unhappy heroine, but a bright, useful and successful woman.

In revising the book for an entirely new edition in 1927, I was more than forty years older than when I wrote it, and had many conflicting emotions. I thought the first eleven chapters almost as good as many kind critics have said, and found pride in them, but while reading had an uneasy consciousness of trouble later on. I found it when "Jo Erring's" love affair began, but could not do much to improve it without recasting the entire book. Poor "Jo's" unreasonable jealousy does not belong in a novel from which the author hopes for permanent fame. It is natural enough, but few men, and no women, will admit it.

Nor is the jealousy of men a modern thing. The early Hindus took brides as young as nine or ten, to prevent old love affairs in their history; and when a Hindu husband died, he expected his widow to jump on his funeral pyre, to insure that she would not marry again. If the widow objected to so cruel a custom, other men attending the funeral saw that the wishes of the jealous husband were carried out.

A good many years ago I made "Jo's" madness into a booklet called "An Ante-Mortem Statement," and although I expected much from it, it soon died a quiet death. Twenty years later, a New York newspaper man sent the booklet to Edward Bok, then editor of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and asked why he had neglected it. Mr. Bok offered me five hundred dollars for the privilege of printing it as a serial, and I ac-

cepted the offer. He wrote me it attracted a storm of protest, and a few letters of commendation, the latter mainly from elderly people who said every young woman should be compelled to read it. Our system of frequent engagements of marriage between the young is one of the worst of our habits, but he who says so cannot hope for popularity. The system results in millions of unhappy marriages we know nothing about. The French plan, which gives young people at least a fair start with marriage, is very much better. But as a literary critic, I am compelled in old age to desert poor "Jo Erring," as others who know about him have done. There is more of the author in "Jo Erring" than in any other portion of "The Story of a Country Town," and "Jo" did much to weaken it.

Many a man has confessed admiration for the book to me without mentioning "Jo" who admired it for no other reason. I have known many men to go to the devil as "Jo" did, and with "Jo's" malady, but they gave some other excuse.

CHAPTER XXIV

It has been frequently said by writing men that *The Atchison Globe* was at one time the most extensively quoted paper in the United States. The statement may never have been true, but I submit as a proposition that I cannot be fairly blamed for mentioning so great a compliment in writing my autobiography.

I cannot remember when I first began writing paragraphs, hoping to attract attention with them, but as that was my natural form of expression, probably I attempted wisdom when I most certainly had none: very early in my career. After we had been issuing the daily in Atchison two or three years, we started a weekly edition, printing it on an old hand press I happened to own. An opposition paper heard of it, and made fun of me, saying I had ambition beyond my ability.

One day a copy of the weekly came back from the Boston *Globe* with notations on the margin, written in pencil:

"Returned; nothing in it."

Thirty-seven paragraphs had been cut from it, and these later appeared in the Boston paper, which was for years my regular and perhaps too generous patron. This was my first taste of fame.

I attended the San Francisco Exposition first at night, and saw this sentence in electric lights on top of a building:

"Better be safe than sorry."

That came into my mind long before as a reporter in Atchison, and I wrote it. I see the sentiment almost every day now. I may sometime find it in a book written before I was born: that has happened, but, so far, I am encouraged to believe I have contributed one saying to the world which has attracted its attention and favor.

The great bulk of my paragraphs have, of course, been insignificant. I once compiled a book of them, and rejected certainly ninety out of every hundred, and those I retained have never attained the distinction of a Best Seller. A good paragraph a month is a favorable record for a busy writer. The closing pages of this book give samples of the paragraphs I wrote forty years ago, and I refer the reader to them, if interested.

If I have been able to write an occasional good paragraph I am entitled to no credit: they come into my mind almost complete; if they do not, I can not write them. When I am compelled to "dig" to fill a page, I fail. In the old days on *The Atchison Globe*, I wrote all day: sometimes more than a hundred different pieces of copy, long and short. Fortunately for me, some of these were liked. A record was once kept in *The Globe* office without my knowledge, and it developed that I really supplied a lot of copy; one day, seven ordinary newspaper columns.

I wrote the paragraphs to "fill up" on dull days, and all days have been dull in my long experience as a reporter. I hear of newspaper offices now where much

condensing is necessary, but with me there was never enough legitimately "going on" to fill the paper. My first attempt at writing a "story" I set direct from the case in Atchison. It was called "The Spirit Child," and a man who kept a store in the room below the office told me he had shed tears over it.

With present facilities for collecting news, possibly newspaper men believe too much in "fillers." Should I be placed in charge of a model newspaper, with ample capital to meet losses, I doubt I would encourage the specialty I practiced so long. Many newspapers have several special writers occupying space to the detriment of legitimate news, which, of course, is the main idea. I once knew a newspaper which had so many reporters writing special (and frequently trifling) things that it was badly crippled, the news was so much neglected. It is a question I am not able to decide; probably no one is. I have observed that some of the New York newspapers have several "colyumists," while others do equally well without them. Readers disagree as widely as publishers. The work of a certain specialist is now appearing in a large number of the best newspapers, and I know plenty of men who thoroughly dislike the daily feature of this highly paid man. How many dislike it I do not know, but I have heard almost no one express approval. Yet the man has more fame than I ever had; my work may have angered many, and pleased few.

It was often said that although I received frequent offers of promotion from the big newspapers, I was

content to remain in the country. The latter statement is true: I have steadily preferred to live in the small town where I began, but never received an offer to work on a big newspaper, except occasional invitations to write special articles. Two reporters on *The Globe*, both of them women, were invited to go to big cities, but I had no such distinction. I don't believe I could work on a city newspaper: I wouldn't know where to begin, or what to do.

Very often I was told I was "wasting my time" in a small town, but it wasn't true: for a long time my income from *The Atchison Globe* averaged twenty-five thousand dollars a year.

I never had visions of enlarging my field except once, and that was a mistake; I bought a failing paper in Kansas City, fifty miles away, but never actually took charge, owing to the failure of a bank and trust company which was custodian of funds I intended to use in financing the venture. That failure robbed me of my savings for the years I had lived in Atchison, but I have since concluded the bank failure was actually a fortunate thing for me, and that I could not have succeeded in Kansas City. A perfecting press had gone with the deal. This I took to Atchison, went to work with more vigor and content than ever before, and soon worked out of a very bad mess. Several years later a man who did not know about the experience said to me:

"You are wasting your time in Atchison. You should be in Kansas City."

It was a compliment I did not deserve, and caused

me to blush. My son Eugene made a success of taking over another paper, but I do not believe I could have done it. He now has a larger income than I ever had, and you may be sure I am not envious. Melville E. Stone, long time head of the Associated Press, once said to me: "Why aren't you a good newspaper man like your son Jim?"

At the time Jim was making a fine record with the Associated Press in Russia; and I was proud of that, too.

One experience in Kansas City I shall never forget. That was in the day when railroad passes were granted freely to editors. I wanted a pass to New York, where I was going to complete some detail of the purchase, and was refused in the name of the Kansas City paper. But the man said if I made the request from *The Atchison Globe*, it would be granted. I have long believed there are plenty of warnings before mistakes are made. I was amply warned before making the Kansas City venture, and blame no one but myself.

Had I properly handled the money I made on the *Globe*, I would have been a rich man now, but being busy with the newspaper, I neglected my finances to such an extent that whenever I had money, it resulted, I may almost say, in a row as to what rogue should get it. A man may keep the money he honestly earns, if he is careful, which I never was. I emphasize the importance of watching everybody: the man who is honest may be careless. But I have saved enough from the

wreck to cause me to hope I will never be dependent—a thing I am very particular about.

Once I knew very well an interesting old gentleman of eighty-six. He had been a preacher in Boston in his younger days, and told a curious story of leaving the ministry. A member of his congregation was a man of distinction and intelligence, but not on the church rolls. The two were close friends, and one evening the pastor asked his friend why he had never joined the church. The friend did not like it very well, and they talked until midnight about religion. The result of the talk was that the pastor never again entered a pulpit or church, securing a position as reader for a publishing house at a greatly reduced salary. From this start he was able to save enough to keep him in his old age. He told me a good deal about his sons and their wives, and his daughters and their husbands: an old story, for I have long known the old are not popular.

"If I should become dependent," the old gentleman said to me, "I should commit suicide."

It was unnecessary; he died peacefully at ninety-one. I do not see fit to give the man's name, although it is an honorable one. I will only add that of all the old people I have ever known, he was the most agreeable, intelligent, and best groomed. It is a pity millions did not know him, he became old so gracefully.

I once wrote a story detailing how an old fellow employed three nurses to attend him in eight hour shifts, that he might die like a gentleman. Previously

his children had persuaded him to live with a favorite daughter, but he soon quarreled violently with her husband, hobbled from the house, with bedclothes wrapped about him, and employed strangers to look after him.

And he found the strangers very kind: they usually are, if one is able to pay union wages for what he requires. Dying is dreadful enough at best, but the most pitiful stories I have heard during a long life have concerned old men who were not able to die like gentlemen, and pay their own way.

CHAPTER XXV

I DOUBT if anyone is able to write an autobiography without exhibiting considerable vanity, however modest the performances he tells about, but readers of this will not find me claiming ability as a public speaker. I have appeared before audiences a good many times, and have always been ashamed afterwards. An audience frightens me: it is almost the exact truth that in my earlier experiences I did not know what I was talking about when on my feet. I am naturally a poor talker, and get it honestly: I have heard my father regret, in his sermons, he had not the gift to tell better what was in his mind. I think that most men who attempt public speaking have stage fright, or are unable to think while on their feet. Only a few have this ability, and some of these have no ability beyond an easy flow of words.

I was once talking with a prominent man who had made a speaking tour under professional management, and was surprised to hear him launch into violent abuse of public speakers. He said they were all bores, and lectures one of our most pronounced public ills. This meant that the man I was talking to had suffered misery during his tour, and was thoroughly ashamed of the experience. It also meant that the man realized that he was a failure as a public speaker, for the few good ones find pleasure as well as profit in the business.

The nearest I ever came to making a good talk in

public was many years ago in a western town where I had been lured by a professional manager. I did not accept all he said about the clamor of the people everywhere to hear me, but accepted too much of it, as most people do in presence of compliments. The opera house, a new and really considerable edifice, had been secured, and the audience was composed of not to exceed thirty people; most of them men, I recall, which was strange, since it is usually women who make up lecture audiences. They become tired of staying at home, and are more willing than men to take a chance on amusement in the evening.

I knew soon after my arrival in the town that everything was going wrong. The citizen who had made the "guarantee" was mad, realizing he had been victimized, and had engaged in a violent quarrel with my "manager." My advertising had attracted one man who had heard of me, and he had called at the hotel, from the windows of which I could see the opera house brilliantly lighted, and no one going in. I told him I would return the money guaranteed for my appearance, and redeem the few tickets sold, but he insisted that I go through with it. So I walked with him to the opera house, angry and ashamed, and arrived late. There was no one to introduce me, but I immediately began, introducing myself. I did not go on the stage, but stood among the thirty who had gathered in one spot.

In introducing myself I said I was a fool who had been led to believe there was a demand for his services as a speaker; and then I launched into an assault on

lecturing and lectures in general. I dislike both, and know a good many things to say on the subject. I had a few notes of my talk, but never took them from my pocket.

There was one gloomy man present who had made me uncomfortable in the audience the night before, in another town, but I defied him, and soon had him interested. I also noticed that the stage hands came down and sat near me. This encouraged me so much that I began to enjoy myself, noting that for once in my life I was able to say what I wanted to say. There was so much enthusiasm in the audience that a good many were attracted from the street, and came in, as there was no doorkeeper to oppose them: the doorkeeper had joined my thirty friends and the stage hands.

I would give much to be able to talk all the time as well as I did the night I was mad at lecturing, and when I told those present I intended to return their money, and quit the tour; which I did, and this seemed to advance me in their favor.

I have escaped humiliation since until the 29th of April, 1927, when a dinner was given me in New York City. I was flattered that such attention should be paid me, and wanted to accept it, but knew I would probably fail if called on for a speech.

Two distinguished men had been appointed as a Committee to conduct me to the dinner. When I entered their automobile at the Waldorf, I think I felt a good deal as a man feels who has eaten the usual breakfast of ham and eggs, and is on the way to the place

of his execution. Arriving at the Biltmore, I was able to ascend some steps. A great number of well dressed ladies and gentlemen were crowding around me, going into the hotel. I remember that at the top of the steps was a magnificent hotel flunky of the kind introduced in this country from Europe: a man truly appalling in his magnificence. I was still able to hear what this man said to the arriving multiude:

"Guests for the Howe dinner take elevators to the left."

I was jammed into the crowd, and ascended to the second floor, where we emerged into a great lobby. Hundreds of people there; men and women gabbling as at an afternoon tea. I had a moment of consciousness here, and recalled a line written by Oliver Wendell Holmes describing such an affair: "Gobble, gabble, get." I dimly recall meeting Irvin Cobb, who was toastmaster, and that he was better looking than I expected to find him: reports as to Mr. Cobb's beauty, as they reached me far in the West, had not been favorable. I also recall that as he sat beside me, he had "the figits," a malady I am familiar with from personal suffering. His feet beat a tattoo under the table, and it seemed to me I was never that bad. I recall Bob Davis, whose speech consisted of taking money out of his pocket, and subscribing to the paper I edit; I recall Rupert Hughes, somehow, and Senator Arthur Capper, of Kansas, but when Irvin Cobb arose, and I knew he was about to introduce me, I think I lost consciousness, for I have no idea what I said. Fannie Hurst was a

guest at the dinner, but I did not know it until she confessed it in a letter.

I had long wished to meet a man named Hendrik Van Loon, who wrote a book I admire because of its intelligent simplicity, and my admiration extended to the author. I am informed that Mr. Van Loon was brought up and formally and distinctly introduced to me. The lady who introduced me says we shook hands cordially, and even exchanged jokes. I have no recollection whatever of meeting him, and recall that, on leaving the hotel, I regretted, in a dazed way, that I did not have the opportunity. No doubt I was introduced to dozens of famous people I have long wished to meet, but am conscious at this moment that I have never seen any of them.

I had met some of the guests before, among them Cyrus H. K. Curtis, whose guest I had been several times, and on these occasions he asked a blessing at table, a habit I have not noted among the common people in a good many years. I knew him to be one of the most modest and kindly of men, but in New York I could only see him as owner of a two-million-dollar yacht, and publisher of some of the world's greatest publications. I had also known Ray Long, Roy Howard, John Golden, and a good many of the others, but at the dinner I could see in them only the Big Boys of the New York I was afraid of.

I lately found a little note book in which I had written down some of the things I wished to say at the dinner. I note this entry: "Good speeches at a banquet

at last." I thought it would be suitable to say that all my life I had heard of the dullness of speeches at banquets, but that it seemed to me that those preceding mine were good (since the speakers could not very well avoid saying nice things about me), but whether I said it or not, I do not know.

Another note consisted of a single word: "Almanacs." I intended to say I did not hope to tell a new joke before so smart an audience, as New York people saw the almanacs before I did—and then tell a new joke. But probably they did not understand a word I said.

On the way to New York I stopped off to visit Corra Harris, in Georgia, and addressed a Rotary Club at Cartersville. The editor there says I did well; I have a copy of his paper to prove this statement. My New York speech was delivered in Cartersville, Georgia.

CHAPTER XXVI

Since the New York dinner I have, of course, thought up a speech that would have been creditable to me there, and pleased the audience; all will remember the old story about "cab wit"— of a man returning from a banquet in a cab, and thinking of the good things he might have said, but did not. I was conscious that a good many at the New York dinner bought tickets because of great persuasion exercised by members of the Committee, and had not heard of me, so I believe that relation of the following incident in my newspaper life, and true in every detail, would have been appropriate in New York.

In *The Globe* office at Atchison we were all plain country newspaper men, but one day there drifted in a real journalist. He was a specialist: a live wire, and had worked in big towns. His name was George Coulter, and his specialty the subscription department. He was also a writer; indeed, he gave me to understand that when he worked in Denver there was some question as to whether George Coulter or Eugene Field would finally become noted. But George Coulter finally preferred the Business End, and as our subscription list needed help, we put him on.

Coulter was a little man, and there were wide spaces between his front teeth. His health was never very good, and as he was thin as well as short, his head was so

small that the bows of the man-size spectacles he wore wrapped twice around his ears. It developed that the other employes, who had never had experience in a big town, and had drifted into the front office from the press room or composing room, were better than Coulter, but as his pay didn't amount to much, we kept him.

Soon after George Coulter's arrival we met his wife; a tall, stout woman probably sixty-five years old. Coulter was not to exceed thirty, and really didn't amount to much, but I have never known another husband to be admired as he was. Mrs. Coulter was a doctor, and had been married before; I heard of two previous husbands, both of them doctors. Whether she had had others I do not know, but she worshiped George, and believed him to be a great journalist. She occasionally irritated me by giving the impression that the prosperity of the paper was due to her husband's efforts. I had heard a good deal of this; nothing at all creditable has ever happened in my life that the credit was not given to some one associated with me. But Mrs. Coulter was a kindly old woman, and I let her believe that Coulter did what the rest of us were doing, and had been doing many years before he came.

I discovered, also, that the domestic relations of Mr. and Mrs. Coulter were not always happy. Coulter frequently went on the road to solicit subscriptions; by going into a territory where the paper was not very well known, he sometimes did very well, and was useful in a way, but I discovered that before starting on these trips, he usually had a difference with his lady.

And she was so distressed about it! She seemed to be to blame; anyway, she took the blame, and often came to me, and begged me to coax Coulter to return to her. He was working on a commission basis, and we never paid much attention when he came and went; we never really cared much whether he ever came back. But his wife loved him sincerely, and, as she had a considerable income earned in practicing a profession learned from her other husbands, she brought money to me, and asked me to send it to Coulter, that he might come home. She feared he might be ill on the road, and poor, and, as he was very sensitive, she felt that maybe he was staying away from her because he hadn't a new suit of clothes. So I often sent him money when there was none coming to him from the office, and he would come back, and loiter around in his listless way a few weeks, and then disappear again.

Coulter was really a disagreeable problem to us, but he was inoffensive, and drifted along from month to month. He didn't act as though he felt superior to his associates at the office, but he certainly felt superior to his stout wife, and although he had worked in big towns, I often wondered she didn't make him behave himself, as she was really quite a woman, and had a good practice. Walt Mason had taken a dislike to Coulter, and used to write poems about him, which he displayed on the walls for Coulter and others to see. I think Mason wrote his personal letters in jingles; certainly many of the local items he brought in were in rime. I have always believed Walt Mason is able to

write rime more easily than any other living man. And Mrs. Coulter heard of his wall-poems about her husband, and frequently wept about them to me.

On one occasion, when Coulter returned from one of his long trips, I noticed he didn't look very well. After appearing at the office every day for awhile, he disappeared, but I supposed he was mad at his wife again about something, and had gone away. A week later, however, I heard he was ill. I had a distinct consciousness that I should go to see him, but was busy, and kept putting it off from day to day.

One morning, a strange little girl appeared at the counter with a note for me. Somehow I had a feeling that the note was from Mrs. Coulter, and that her husband was worse; which made me feel guilty because I had not called to see her before.

It turned out as I feared: Coulter was not only worse: he was dead, and Mrs. Coulter asked in the note that I come to see her. Feeling guilty, I went at once.

She lived over a jewelry store, on the main street, and when I climbed the stairway softly, and rapped at the door, was admitted.

Mrs. Coulter was in a pitiful state of grief, and I was thoroughly ashamed of myself because I had neglected her. It also developed that she was almost in need; she had been unable to practice during her husband's illness, and asked if I would not help her provide a coffin in which to send the body to a brother who lived in another town. I cheerfully agreed to do this, and comforted the distressed widow as much as I could.

Mrs. Coulter told me what a wonderful man her husband was; how journalism had been robbed of one of its ornaments, and how he was just getting started in the world when death cut him off. I accepted all she said, as people do under such circumstances, and added a comforting word myself, although the actual facts were that Coulter, during his lifetime, had not amounted to much.

Then I went away to make the funeral arrangements. Arriving at the undertaker's, I felt so ashamed because of my neglect of Coulter that I bought a very good casket, and resolved to have a choir, and a funeral service. Mrs. Coulter intended leaving with the body on a late afternoon train, so I had plenty of time, and went at once to the most popular preacher in town. When I told him how friendless Coulter was, the preacher readily agreed to officiate at the funeral, and helped me make up a quartet to sing appropriate hymns. The soprano and contralto hadn't much to do, and as they were friends of mine I had no trouble in securing their consent by telephone, but I had some trouble with the tenor and bass. Both of them worked for employers who were often bothered by requests to let the singers off for funerals, but I called on these employers, and, by telling them how friendless, amiable and unknown Coulter was, they not only agreed to let the singers off, but promised to attend the services I had arranged.

Then I went to work on the pall bearers. I picked out five of the most prominent men in town, determined

that Mrs. Coulter should be satisfied with the funeral I had arranged, however much she resented my neglect to call during her husband's illness. The men I picked out as pall bearers were very kind, and readily consented to act, when I explained the case; men are always very nice about such things.

The funeral was to occur at 5 P. M., and the men who were to act with me as pall bearers were instructed to meet at that hour at the foot of the stairway leading up to Mrs. Coulter's rooms over the jewelry store. They were all there promptly, except Balie Waggener, the lawyer. When he didn't come I recalled that he was always promising to deliver public addresses, and then failing to appear, but I hadn't time to be indignant, for the hour of the funeral had arrived, and we lacked a pall bearer. The bankers I had selected to assist were also indignant because of Balie's failure to appear, and said that was the way he did everything. Just then Sam Kelsey, the mayor, came along. I wondered I had forgotten the mayor, so we grabbed him, and explained that we needed him. He had just lit a fifteen-cent cigar, but threw it away, after taking a few regretful puffs, and we hurried him up the stairs ahead of us.

He hadn't the remotest idea where we were taking him; but he was a noted lodgeman and old soldier, and knew just what to do at a funeral, so he at once took charge. All the pall bearers, except the mayor, sent flowers, as had the two employers who had excused the tenor and bass to sing in the quartet. The members of

the quartet were present, as was the preacher, and two girls from the office. Mrs. Coulter had always believed the girls at the office flirted with her husband, although they really abominated him, but in the presence of death she forgave all, and had her arms about one of them.

Sam Kelsey, being experienced, saw that we were ready to begin, so he made a signal to the members of the quartet, and they sang two beautiful selections. It was really very impressive, and Mrs. Coulter shook with emotion; evidently she thought the leading men of the town were paying George the attention he deserved, now that he was dead, and her grief greatly moved me, for she was really fond of her husband. Sam Kelsey tiptoed over to Mrs. Coulter during the singing, and spoke a comforting word to her, and if any of the pall bearers did not know how to act, he gently and quietly put them right.

The preacher spoke impressively of the dead; I had given him an idea of the life of the deceased, making it as favorable as possible; and, after the quartet sang another hymn, Sam Kelsey, the mayor, knew it was time to carry the casket down the stairway to the hearse, which had by this time backed up to the sidewalk. So he arranged the pall bearers according to size, and, at a signal from him, we picked up the casket, and carried it reverently down the stairs, depositing it in the hearse.

My idea was to cut across lots, meet the hearse at the depot, and put the casket in the baggage car, but

Sam Kelsey wouldn't have it that way: he lined us up on either side of the hearse, three on a side, and, after squinting along the lines to see that we were properly placed, he gave a signal to the driver of the hearse, and we walked with measured tread to the depot. We had on white cotton gloves, much too long for us in every finger, but altogether we made a rather impressive procession, with our white pall bearer gloves and rosettes, and with Mrs. Coulter and the two girls from the office following in a carriage.

Arriving at the depot, we placed the casket on a truck, and wheeled it to the baggage car. It was a very hot day, but Sam Kelsey made us remove our hats while taking the casket from the hearse to the baggage car. The casket was very heavy, and it was hard work getting it into the car, but finally this was accomplished, and the flowers placed on the casket. Then we stood around in solemn silence for a moment, before departing, and Sam Kelsey, with his hat still off, wiped a lot of perspiration from the top of his bald head, and, leaning over to me, whispered in a tender, sympathetic way:

"Who was he?"

CHAPTER XXVII

THERE is an odd type of man, it has long been said, who cuts off his nose to spite his face. I have that disposition: when deeply offended I am apt to do reckless and foolish things more harmful to me than to those offering the offense. Some old ancestor of mine must have been a great fool in that way, but I am able to record to my credit that I have been steadily outgrowing the disposition; it does not influence me nearly so much at seventy-five as it did between twenty and fifty.

Twelve years ago things were going badly in Atchison, and, when furiously angry, I suddenly made up my mind to quit the *Globe*, the cause of the annoyance. So I quietly and quickly made an arrangement to turn it over to my two sons. The proposal was to give them control if they would induce old employes and friends to raise a specified sum for the minority stock. The price I named was not half the value of the paper: what I received in cash was almost exactly the sum it was earning every year: in my anger I named a figure that could be easily and promptly raised, as it was. I was so anxious to get out of the newspaper that I supplied the money with which the new owners paid their bills until the first month's collections came in.

Then I took my old typewriter, and went home to sulk. That afternoon the paper carried announcement of retirement, and the messages of regret I received

somewhat soothed my wounded feelings: Frank I. Cobb, who long enjoyed the reputation of being the best editorial writer in the United States, wrote as agreeably about me in the New York *World* as any of my intimate friends at home could have suggested.

Whether I was wise in retiring, I do not know, but the pace at which I worked and worried was telling on me. The trouble was nervousness, and I could not sleep. Working under the system I had created was exceedingly nerve racking; it is no more than the truth to say many days I did not have half my working hours to devote to legitimate duties, being interrupted by callers, or by details I should have been free from. I was flattered when noted men called on me, but, while they were in the office, my special cog on the paper was not operating: it was like a switchboard operator entertaining callers in a telephone exchange, with all the bells ringing in protest. George W. Cable was such a caller on one occasion; Thomas Wentworth Higginson on another. I had provided a private office for myself, but actually had the scant privacy Irvin Cobb later attributed to a goldfish, and which H. L. Mencken declared was an old joke, although it was new to me. The system adopted in cities (and which I suppose is necessary, although sometimes insulting to desirable callers) would not have worked in Atchison.

One of my special annoyances was that after I had patiently trained employes, other editors were determined to get them away from me, sometimes attributing to them work I had done. One man thus lured away re-

turned, and worked on an opposition paper. He himself had so much confidence in his ability that he announced he had "made" the *Globe*, and would proceed to unmake it. He not only failed to do this, but the paper employing him did not long survive. I have finally been given too generous credit for everything I did in Atchison, but there were many and persistent early protests. About the only lawsuit I ever brought was to recover money dishonestly taken from me and others. The attorney for the defendant stated in open court that his client had written "The Story of a Country Town," although I had written it before the man came to town, or I had so much as heard of him. There are at least a dozen who have been credited with "making" *The Atchison Globe*, and that I did not enjoy the rumors is evidenced by a little sketch appearing about the time I discharged a man who did not want to go:

BART WHERRY'S REBELLION

Our people are distressed because Bart Wherry, the lawyer, will move to the county seat and open an office there. We don't like to lose a good citizen, particularly one like Bart Wherry, who has become rather noted over the state because of his speeches in conventions and at notable court trials.

So a committee called on him to see if anything could be done. It turned out nothing could be; Bart is going away. He talked quite frankly to members of the committee. It seemed he is tired of keeping Charley Millard down.

Charley Millard is a man of about Bart's age, and in Bart's employ; he sits in the outer office and tells callers when Bart will be at leisure. In addition he keeps the books and looks after the collections.

Charley Millard does not really amount to a great deal, having tried practicing law for himself, but when Bart Wherry wins a big case we all say Charley Millard really won it; that he looked up the law and told Bart what to say in the trial. When Bart makes a speech at a convention and the papers ring with it, we say Charley Millard wrote the speech; that he is bookish, while Bart is not.

Charley Millard's wife also believes her husband should have the reputation as a lawyer enjoyed by his employer, and in the course of a long time Bart has become tired of the talk. So he is going to the county seat to open an office.

Charley Millard wanted to go along and occupy his old position, but Bart said to him:

"No, Charley, you have already done too much for me. I want you to take the position in the legal world your talents deserve. And at the same time I expect Fin Wilkinson to be nominated this fall for President of the United States. It has always been said of Fin that were it not for whisky he would occupy the first position in the gift of the people. Now that no more liquor is to be had, let Fin come through with you."

Some of my friends say I would have been dead long ago had I kept up the old pace. I do not know, but have been better since retirement. I found long sea voyages did me good, and my daughter accompanied

me on one of these. I seem to have looked so badly that a woman of a race famous for bluntness—she came from London—told her to hurry me on around the world as rapidly as possible, since I certainly would not live to complete the journey alive. There was even some talk among the passengers as to the embalming facilities on board, in case the captain could be persuaded not to throw my body overboard. I have already outlived the woman fourteen years.

In a short time after retirement from daily newspaper work I established "E. W. Howe's Monthly," that I might not be entirely out of the writing game. The price was at one time ten cents per year; the publication didn't amount to much, and I made a price to conform. During the war costs so much increased that the price was made twenty-five cents. Elbert Hubbard once gave the "Monthly" a notice in "The Phillistine," and we received over a thousand subscribers as a result. The price was then ten cents a year. The Haldeman-Julius weekly gave the "Monthly" a notice after I had advanced the price to twenty-five cents, and more than eight hundred subscribers were received as a result of it.

A collection of my writing in the "Monthly" has attained the dignity of a book published and printed in London. As I do only simple writing I shall give the reader the luxury of an extract from the work of H. L. Mencken, who, I take it, is our most skillful man in the use of foreign words, as well as those most infrequently used in the United States. Mr. Mencken

wrote an introduction of twenty-two pages to the book referred to above, "Ventures in Common Sense," and I quote from it to display his charming style, so different from my own:

"This collection of aphorisms and arguments is made up chiefly of extracts from *E. W. Howe's Monthly*, perhaps the most curious as it is certainly one of the most interesting of all the 25,000 periodicals now issuing in the United States. Retiring from the management of the Atchison (Kansas) *Globe*, a newspaper which he had brought up from the utmost obscurity to great influence and prosperity, Howe established his *Monthly* in order to soothe an old journalist's incurable itch to have his say. Here, even more than when he edited his daily, he had an organ all his own, and here he began to unfold a body of ideas that won him a national audience. He had been, of course, by no means unheard of before, but in his *Monthly*, for the first time, he could throw off the taboos and hesitations that lie upon even the most independent of daily papers, and the results of this new freedom were quickly visible. I doubt that there is another periodical in America which shows so remarkable a subscription list to-day. I scarcely know of the editor of a big daily, indeed, who doesn't glance at it now and then, and the same thing is true of the editors of the principal magazines. What primarily attracts practical men is the extraordinary charm of his naïve and confidential manner, his quite exceptional capacity for putting the plain thoughts of a plain man into such English that the professional eye

immediately discerns its skillfulness and delights in its disarming persuasiveness. Above all, what his readers recognize in him is the rare quality of honesty—a quality, in fact, so seldom encountered in American writing that it would be stretching the truth but little to say that it is never encountered at all. Our Puritan culture, as every one knows, makes for many laudable virtues: enterprise, industry, philoprogenitiveness, patriotism, the fear of God, a great appetite for brummagem ideals, a high desire to be righteous, a noble gratitude for the fact that we are not as other men are. But one of the things it does not make for is that austere intellectual passion which exalts a bald fact above comfort, security and the revelation of God—one of the things it does not promote is common truthfulness. The American, indeed, always views the truth a bit suspiciously, particularly if it be the truth about himself and his; he seems convinced that it is dangerous, and perhaps downright indecent. . . . The disparity between what is publicly approved and what is privately done is at the heart of the Anglo-Saxon, and especially of the American character; it sets our people off from nearly all other peoples. It is the cause of the astounding hypocrisy that foreigners always see in us, both when we denounce them and when we seek to court them, and it is the cause, too, of our national inability to understand those foreigners and their habits of mind. That hypocrisy, to the foreign eye, bathes the American scene; even the more civilized varieties of Englishmen are acutely conscious of it. We posture as apostles of

fair play, as good sportsmen, as professional knights errant—and throw beer-bottles at the umpire when he refuses to cheat for our side. We bawl about the malefactions of Big Business—and every man in Little Business is trying to gouge and rob his way into Big Business as fast as he can. We save the black-and-tan republics from their native Bryans, Roosevelts and Burlesons—and flood them with "deserving Democrats" of our own. We deafen the world with our whoops for liberty—and submit to laws that invade and destroy our most sacred rights. We profess a personal virtue that would shame the monks of Mount Athos—and have a higher crime rate than Port Said, and more abandoned women than London, and a more corrupt bureaucracy than Russia under the czars. We play policeman and Sunday-school superintendent to half of Christendom—and lynch a darkey every two days in our own back-yard. Thus the curious dualism of the land. No wonder foreigners stand amazed before the incredible contrast between our pretention and our practice—men jailed for republishing parts of the Bible and the Declaration of Independence, notorious drunkards advocating prohibition on the floor of Congress, bawdy judges sentencing men under the Mann Act, shyster lawyers lifted into office as reformers, trust-busting politicians borrowing money from trust magnates, tax-dodgers exposing and denouncing tax-dodgers, uplifters picking the public pocket, pleureurs for democracy abolishing democracy, men imprisoned, knocked about, tortured in the land of liberty for daring to

speak out for liberty. . . . The primary difficulty is that the American people, despite a century and a half of struggles for freedom, are still burdened by a crushing heritage of Puritanical pishposh, and that it forces them into efforts to obey rules of conduct which no healthy race could actually observe and survive. The secondary difficulty is to be found in the extraordinary timorousness, the pervasive intellectual cowardice, which Puritanism carries with it. The thing needed is obviously a thorough overhauling of the outworn national code—perhaps its forthright abandonment and the formulation of an entirely new one, closer to the unescapable facts. But that is precisely what Americans seem least fitted for. The impulse that revealed itself in a Machiavelli, in a Montaigne and in a Nietzsche, and that shows itself even to-day, on a lower scale, in a Wells and a Shaw, is apparently not in them. Such a man, rising among them, would be smothered in distrust, and perhaps swiftly conducted to the calaboose; there is no country in the world in which iconoclasm is more perilous. Rather than grapple with the fundamental problem, the American prefers to confine himself to superficialities, and what he accomplishes on that plane is usually no more than a clumsy rearrangement of the old platitudes. A glance at even the most serious American newspaper is sufficient to show how shallow American thinking is—how much a matter of mere formulæ, most of them palpably unworkable and idiotic. There is no country in which legislation directs itself toward loftier goals and is more sharply flavored with pious

purpose, and there is no country in which the manner of its enactment is more corrupt and dishonest, or in which there is a larger body of unenforced and unenforceable laws. No voice is raised against this folly—none, that is, save the voice of the aforesaid E. W. Howe. A man thoroughly American, a man especially enmeshed in the Puritanism that is the national curse, a Middle Westerner of the Middle Westerners, and by no means disposed to conceal it, he yet manages to get the method of the free spirit into his study of the phenomena that lie about him, and even into his examination of the thing that he is himself. This is the remarkable fact that sets him off from the whole vast herd of other national sages: he is the only one who practices resolutely a relentless honesty, sacrificing every appearance, however charming, to what he conceives to be the truth. He is, no doubt, often in error, but what I always get out of him is the feeling that, right or wrong, he is at least absolutely honest—that this is precisely how the thing appears to one frank and shrewd and highly reflective man. There is never any soughing of wind-blown theory in him; one never finds him arguing for a doctrine on the familiar ground that it is comforting. If he speaks for it, he is sincerely in favor of it because he has examined it, tested it, revolved it in his mind, slept over it, looked inside it—and when he is thus in favor of it, I have a conviction that the overwhelming majority of other reflective, worldly wise, sharply observant Americans are also in favor of it—that his voice, in a very real sense, is the

voice of the better sort of American people. He represents a quite different sort—the man who discerns the eternal realities in the mass of rumble-bumble, but is still a bit too timorous to be articulate. Howe is that man with his timorousness thrown off. He has found that, for all the barbaric taboos, there is yet an audience that likes to hear things discussed frankly, and to find its secret notions put into plain words.

There is nothing in the doctrine of Howe that is very startling; what joy the man of meditative habit gets out of it, barring occasional delight in its broad, rustic humors, must be mainly the joy of simple recognition. It is all, considering it a moment, obvious enough; some of it is downright platitude. But nevertheless it is platitude of a special sort—the platitude of fact, not of mere maudlin fancy. It stands diametrically opposed to the mush that passes so widely for the national philosophy; it is in direct opposition to all the current presumptions in politics. He has no belief in the bombastic bosh of what is called Public Service, now garbled so raucously and by such palpable frauds. He believes in intelligent self-interest, and guesses, probably correctly, that self-interest is what actually rules even the loudest of the prophets of altruism, in politics, in the professions, in business, in government and in all the large affairs of the world. What he says is often simple enough—the obvious boiled down to its elementals—but he gets into it a sly wit that is a hundred times as effective as the most elaborate of controversions, and he gets into it a variety of

honesty that is all but unheard of on the other side. One day, seeking to introduce him to the readers of a magazine, I tried to put his general point of view into half a dozen plain propositions. This is what it came to:

1. The only real human motive is intelligent self-interest; altruism is not only bogus, but impossible.

2. The first object of self-interest is to survive. The possession of money makes it easier to survive. Ergo, it is virtuous to get money.

3. A man who gets it is a better citizen than one who doesn't; what he does for himself also benefits the community in general.

4. The aim of all reformers is to get something for themselves. They pretend that it isn't; hence, even when they chance to serve good causes, they are liars.

5. Any American of average talents and decent industry can get enough money, barring acts of God, to make himself comfortable.

6. Any man who fails to do so shows an unfitness to survive, and deserves to be exploited by his betters.

7. The people have a remedy for all public abuses in their hands. If they fail to get relief, then the blame lies wholly upon their own credulity, emotionalism and imbecility."

My worst enemies admit "E. W. Howe's Monthly" has some very distinguished subscribers, as well as that it does not deserve them. That it has a few very great admirers perhaps I only know, since I alone handle the publication's correspondence, in addition to writing all

it contains. John D. Rockefeller once did me the honor to order two hundred extra copies, and they were billed at two cents each, less than the regular subscription price. I venture the assertion that Mr. Rockefeller does not often make purchases at less than current rates; the man has been mercilessly robbed by salesmen. I may properly add that while Mr. Rockefeller has been widely accused of being tricky, he promptly paid the amount; by check, I believe, and this was promptly honored by the bank on which it was drawn.

After I had announced the appearance of a free and untrammeled publication, Edward Bok wrote and suggested that I sell the indignant matter I had in mind to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, to which proposal I dissented, adding that such a venture on his part would result in the loss of at least half the subscribers the *Journal* already had.

It is my rule, when a subscriber expresses disapproval, to send his money back, and take his name from the small book in which we keep the records. Two rather distinguished men of experience have talked of becoming publishers of the "monthly," with a view of giving it a larger circulation, but both, after looking me over, objected to my age.

"Where would I be," one of them asked, "in case of your death?"

The point was so well taken that no arrangements were made.

So many editors select extracts from the "Monthly,"

and pay for the privilege, that I have a considerable revenue from this source; a New York magazine editor once printed several pages, and sent me $150 for each of them. A subscriber paid me a thousand dollars and expenses for talking an hour at a dinner given in the Gold Room of the Congress hotel in Chicago, but my triumphs usually are more modest: I recall one lady admirer who has been in one insane asylum, two prisons, and shot three husbands.

I have also to my credit a "notice" in the Encyclopedia Britannica, and a quotation in the Standard Dictionary. Someone sent me notice of the dictionary honor, and I frequently referred to it, but lately I have forgotten the page. If any reader of this encounters it, I shall be obliged to him for a letter.

Since having no duties to interfere, I have spent the winter months of the last seven years in Florida, as I found the cold months a little more trying as age approached. This residence in the South has rather increased an impression long entertained: that there are a tremendous number of well-to-do in the United States. In Miami I see thousands of fine elderly people able to escape the winter rigors in the North, East and West, and they are so well behaved I have concluded that the noted and successful are very generally only specially good workmen who have kept everlastingly at it, and are able to take it easier in their less active days. I have noted that a large majority of these fine people began in the country, where many of them still

live usefully and pleasantly. Some of them have been promoted to the big cities on merit, and have enormous fortunes, but I cannot see that they are any happier than those who have enough.

CHAPTER XXVIII

I DO not care for what is known as the political game: I have attended but one national convention, and that only to see what such a gathering was like. Although I had a fairly good seat, I soon returned home, that I might find out what was going on from reading the press bulletins. I have never attended a state convention in Kansas, as politicians have not been my heroes; I regard them as often mischievous, and always extravagant. Long ago I was impressed with the declaration of a statesman that one-half our public expenditures might be saved and the service improved.

Having lived a long time, my vacations have included six trips abroad, two of them around the world by different routes, and one to South America and the West Indies. I believe the trips abroad did more to round out such education as I have than any other of my experiences. Once I traveled straight away for three weeks, day and night, without seeing land, or the smoke of another steamship. I was on another ship a full month continuously, and on another three weeks and a half, always traveling toward home, which I finally reached with better understanding of my nothingness.

India, with its beauty and cruelty; buried cities in Africa of which nothing is known; dead civilizations around the Red Sea—these instructed and humbled me as the people of the new world and books had not been

able to do. I had lived among teeming millions of the prosperous; elsewhere I found vastly greater millions of oppressed, hopeless, hungry. The foolish ceremonies at Benares, the heathenish customs among the oldest peoples at Jerusalem and Cairo, kept my brain busy appraising; here was the truth as it had not been presented to me before. The roar of Victoria Falls, the dry and vast plains of Australia, the boiling lakes of New Zealand: I had gone to see it all as an idle holiday, and came back with an education. After realizing how little I knew of other countries, and how unfair I had been with them, I no longer marveled that they were unfair with us.

Expositions have always interested me, and I have seen all those at home in my time, and several over seas. I have made many long journeys to hear unusual musical events. I have gone far into the inland sea beyond Vancouver, British Columbia, to see the trees, and hunt and fish. Certain towns and cities become famous, as do certain men, and I have visited most of these. I think San Francisco, New Orleans, Portland, Oregon, and possibly Boston, made most lasting impressions on me at home, and Benares, in India, abroad.

Five times I have hunted big game in the Northwest. One of these trips was little more than a carouse in the wilds, with a number of prominent men patronizing a free bar: I came near being killed by accident by a very well-known statesman. Drinking has always been obnoxious to me, in public or private, and I did not repeat the experience. On our return to the railroad, we

"shot up the town," its leading citizens joining us. One of our party rode a horse into a saloon and gambling house in the best western style. We "captured" everything in town, the proprietors and inmates joining us, to enjoy the Big Time we were having; when men are far from home, they do very ridiculous things. So far as I am concerned, experience with ridiculous things has had a tendency to reform me. The town we "shot up" and "captured," then as tough a place as I have ever seen, is now a fine city. For years I wondered what became of the wretched women I saw there in the saloons, and hoped they had disappeared with civilization, but saw a lot of them last year in the streets of an oil town in the Panhandle of Texas.

On another of these hunting trips members of the party were Judge David J. Brewer and General George Crook. At the time, Brewer was a United States Circuit Judge, but later went on the supreme bench of the United States. General Crook was commander of the Department of the Platte, a survivor of the Civil war, and noted Indian fighter. I greatly enjoyed companionship with both these noted men. Major Burke, General Crook's orderly, told me he never knew Crook to talk to anyone as freely as he did to me; and Major Burke knew his chief so long and well that he wrote a book about him. For weeks I slept beside Judge Brewer in the open, and he would look up at the sky, and tell me the story of the stars, of which he knew a great deal. Later I was in a railroad wreck with him, and assisted in carrying out the dead and wounded.

These two men of entirely different types were among the most eminent of the professors in the world school I have attended. One day General Crook used a table to represent the battle ground at Little Big Horn, and told me the story of the Custer massacre, in which nearly three hundred officers and men were killed: not one left to tell the tale. The only survivor on the white side was a cavalry horse called "Comanche," now stuffed and preserved in the museum at the University of Kansas.

How different this soldier's story of the fight from the lurid accounts I had been familiar with! During the later years of my life I have been specially observing the difference between facts and accepted history. General Crook said Custer and his immediate command probably attempted to cross the Little Big Horn, and struck quicksand. During this delay, the Indians began the battle. Then Custer attempted to retreat up the hill behind him, to form his men into a defensive circle, and the soldiers were picked off as they retreated up the hill: possibly the remnant of the command surrendered near the top of the hill, and were killed with their own guns. I have been on the field, and the monuments marking where the soldiers fell indicate that Crook's theory may be correct. First there is a single monument near the river: then two further up the hill; then three, four, half a dozen, a dozen, as the retreat progressed.

The quarreling about the tragedy on the Little Big Horn has attracted almost as much controversy as the

battle of Waterloo, and the evidence is equally shadowy. In a recent magazine I saw a statement by a retired general of the army that Captain Benteen, who was with Custer on the morning of the sixth of June, 1876, but later detached to accompany Major Reno, was not under fire that day. On the other hand, I knew well a man who was a soldier with Custer's command, and detached with Reno, as Benteen was. He told me Reno was assaulted by a great body of Indians, and that he drove them off; that Captain Benteen was not only present, but that Reno seemed to look to him for advice, as Benteen was a more experienced officer. My informant had been only a common soldier, but, when I knew him, had advanced to an important business man; certainly he was quiet, and not given to boasting.

Another instructor in the university I have attended was B. B. Brooks, cowboy, trapper, hunter, ranchman, and who later served two terms as Governor of Wyoming. I had all sorts of experiences with this man, including partnership in running range sheep. In the early days we rode over the territory, investigated thoroughly, cut the figures in two, for safety, in the usual way of adventuring men, and then went into sheep in Wyoming at the exact moment we should have kept out.

The smartest men in the mountains are the trappers. Almost anyone may occasionally fool cattle, sheep, elk, deer, bear, antelope, or men and women, but a cute one is required to fool a beaver, which Brooks could do.

Western stories have always been popular, and ex-

aggerated to the point of absurdity. The best one I ever heard was told me by Brooks about his trapping days, and it had the merit of truthfulness: I believe I can always tell when a story is probable, from having been so frequently deceived. This man, who, at twenty years old, was trapper, hunter, and cowboy, associating with rough men, is now one of the strongest men of the West: banker, stock grower, oil operator. I love this story of a poor young man growing into honorable distinction: a story heard more frequently in the United States than in any other country.

Brooks lived in the West when it was really rough, and his experiences fascinated me. For forty years we have been intimate: occasionally I visit him, and he visits me. I have observed of him that I have never introduced him to a man who did not later say: "I liked your friend Brooks."

For a considerable time he was what is known as a "skin hunter": that is, he killed elk for their hides, and must have been a good shot. But I have seen him miss easy ones, which the best of them do. In stories of western bad men, marvelous shooting is claimed—and laughed at out where the rifle and pistol shooting was actually done. And the outlaws were not the best shots in the West: anyway, they were all killed off by honest men or officers who could shoot better.

So far as I am able to judge, after long association with men of the West, the best all-round shot in its history was Charley Reynolds, chief of scouts with Custer at the Little Big Horn massacre, and who lost

his life there. He was able to make a better average of "good shots" than any other western character I have heard of; and, by-the-way, he was originally a farmer boy in the Kansas county in which I have lived fifty years. He was so little of a talker and boaster that the Indians called him Lonesome Charley, and his reputation came from such men of experience as General George Crook, familiar with arms from youth at West Point to generalship in the Civil war, and in the Indian wars of the West. Many other men of equal experience have attested to the reputation I give Charley Reynolds, including General Custer himself, and many of his captains. When Lonesome Charley's body was found across the river from where Custer made his last stand, fifty-eight empty cartridge shells were found beside him. As he had acres of Indians to shoot at, it would be interesting to know how many of the fifty-eight shells did execution before he abandoned rifle and pistol for good.

I have seen Brooks kill four running antelope with four rifle shots; and I have seen him miss a standing elk at eighty yards. It is like that in hunting; also in life. Brooks is the type of man who tells stories on himself, and such stories are usually reliable. I have spent months with him wandering over the West on horseback, looking for game, and heard his experiences at intervals, when something came up to suggest them.

When living alone near the mountain foothills, he awoke one morning to find an early snow had covered the entire country, including his cabin, outbuildings

and fences. Looking out the window he saw thousands of elk, driven out of the mountains by the heavy snow. Many of them were in his yard, as the snow covered everything, and the buildings did not attract their suspicion. Near the cabin was a large pole corral, with the gate open. Brooks believed he could dash out suddenly with his dog, chase some of the elk into the corral, and close the gate. This he did, and actually caught seventeen. Then he went back to get his breakfast, all the while feeling proud of his exploit. After breakfast he went out to look at his prizes again, and the dog, seeing the seventeen elk, made a dash at them. This so frightened the animals that they bunched and surged against the corral at one point, tore it down, and everyone escaped. Only an honest man would finish a good story like that. I once told it to a woman, and she said later:

"I feel like crying every time I think of all those elk getting away!"

Brooks was then under contract to supply elk meat to the soldiers at Fort Fetterman, and the seventeen that got away represented a pretty good week's work.

The smartest, squarest, most capable man Brooks ever knew in the West was probably an outlaw, his partner two or three seasons in trapping. At the time Brooks was almost a boy, and the rough man with whom he associated advised, protected and directed him as the best of fathers might have done. One day, at a lonely post office in the mountains, the man received a letter, and disappeared within an hour, as if he had

received news of a possible pursuer; and Brooks has never seen or heard of him since.

Brooks has wife and children, and I knew them all from the beginning. Although he has always lived on the frontier, there has never been a serious accident or sickness in his family. When his first child was born, he rode thirty miles for a doctor, who returned with him at a furious gallop. The doctor was "Doc" Barber, made famous in Western history by Owen Wister.

A long time ago, when Brooks was riding in his mountain pasture, looking after the cattle, he encountered the tracks of a silver-tip bear in a light and recent snow. The instinct of the hunter was keen in him, and he whirled his horse instantly to follow the trail, which led toward some bad breaks known as the Bear Dens. Suddenly he stopped, and laughed at himself.

"I have a bride in the cabin down on the flat," he said, "and haven't lost a bear."

Whereupon he turned toward his home and bride of only a few weeks. But he had an uneasy feeling, somehow, about that bear; with the result that he followed and shot it. Had a single cartridge out of five failed him, there would have been another widow, and another victory for a bear.

CHAPTER XXIX

I HAVE spent this day in what we call "The Morgue" at *The Globe* office at Atchison. Here are filed clippings from newspapers, and other data, new and old, together with files of the paper since 1877. This record shows that a burly man once stepped up to me on the street, and, with pistol in hand, announced his intention of killing me, although I had done nothing to warrant so great a frenzy. An item had been printed about him, which I did not write, but it was not offensive; no more than that the man, a doctor, had been called in a runaway accident. I believe he had been drinking, and was angry about something else. He was not arrested, or so much as reprimanded. Indeed, I heard a citizen went to the doctor, and said it was a pity he had not killed me. I had supported this savage critic for governor, because he was a "home man," and he won for no other reason than that his opponent was John P. St. John, a Republican asking a third term. John P. St. John was a fanatical prohibitionist also, and later it was said he defeated James G. Blaine for president of the United States. Thousands of Republicans openly opposed St. John in his third term ambition. When the local Democrat came up for reëlection under usual conditions, he was defeated by the usual tremendous Republican majority. In every country town there are always "two crowds": citizens who dislike each other

to so great an extent that they retard community progress. Frequently the citizen abused most venomously is most upright and useful. I am sure the records will show that during my long life in Atchison I belonged to the best "crowd" there.

Further in the record I found a certain lawyer was appointed assistant attorney general in our town, to specially enforce the prohibitory law. One night a bomb was exploded on an open back porch at his home. It was whispered about that he said I did it. Actually at the moment the explosion occurred I was standing on the street with two citizens: we had been out late, attending a public meeting, a fact known to a good many. We heard the explosion, produced by someone placing loose powder in a tomato can, and firing it by means of a slow fuse. I printed statements from as good men as lived in the town that the assistant attorney general exploded the harmless bomb himself, to attract attention to the sacrifices and dangers encountered in doing good. Not long before I had proven that a man similarly before the public, and who claimed he had been shot at by an assassin, had himself fired a bullet through his own hat. Such things were common in that day in reform work in small towns.

I also found that a citizen had stated on the street that, by persecution in *The Globe*, I had driven out of town a valuable institution. I proved with evidence that could not be doubted that the Kansas City Stockyards Company paid the institution $150,000 in cash to desert Atchison, and move to Kansas City, a more favorable

location for extensive operation. I demonstrated fully that before the institution announced its intention to desert Atchison, I had been its loyal and enthusiastic friend: that, after the announcement of desertion, I said no more than that Atchison had existed before the institution came, and would exist after its departure. The best citizens urged me to say this, as encouragement to the town people to recover from the blow as soon as was possible. The record further shows that within a week I was clamoring for an institution to supplant the one we had lost, and we finally got it. I regret to add it did not do well; some years later the man we had subsidized tried to burn his own plant for the insurance. Town building is attended with many discouragements and disturbances.

One man declared in an opposition paper I was insane; and had himself been in an asylum. The record shows I truthfully explained he was angry at me because I denied he had a cure for consumption, since the patient who certified he had been cured died a week later of consumption.

A man once printed a card in an opposition paper saying I had meanly hounded him for years. The record shows I had not mentioned him at all. Probably he was dissatisfied because I daily mentioned a good many others, but had concluded he was not worthy of such distinction.

A man accused me of defeating him for mayor while pretending to be his friend. The truth is this: The man was a candidate for reëlection, and I decided that

his opponent, a Democrat, would make a better mayor, and defeated the Republican with not exceeding a hundred lines. I noted one day that a great number of Negro women were registering, and that all declared they intended voting for the Republican. Every day thereafter until the registration closed, I printed the number of colored women who registered, and said they went to the trouble that they might vote for the Republican. The result was that the white women registered and voted, and as they greatly outnumbered the blacks, the Democrat was elected. My experience as an editor has always been that if he wishes to control the people he must not let them know it.

The advance agent of a circus came to town one day, and my smartest opponent, Tom Stivers, got hold of him first, with the result that the agent came into the *Globe* office late, and threw down a signed contract for ten dollars, and said I could take it or leave it alone. I chose to leave it alone, and began war on the circus. When able to first get hold of the advance agent of a circus, I have received as high as a hundred dollars, and fifty tickets, for his advertising: every country editor is proud of his ability to successfully wrangle with a circus agent, and get a good contract. The next year the owner of the show himself came in very humbly, for I had ruined his business the year before. I explained my anger, and apologized for my conduct, for I fought unfairly: I ran a huge advertisement free that no one might suspect I was mad at the circus, and tried to injure it with items about small-pox in Hiawatha,

the town from which the show came to Atchison. There *was* small-pox in Hiawatha, and I printed a good many items, but not so many as to attract attention to my resentment, about the importance of vaccination, the danger in great assemblies, and the like. It was a mean trick, and I am ashamed of it now, but country editors hate each other cordially; and the circus agent intimated, in offering me ten dollars, that the *Globe* didn't amount to much, anyway. All those with whom I had rows in Atchison were enemies, and attacked me first. However fair and useful an editor may be in his own town, there is always a faction opposed to him: and occasionally his friends are as unreasonable as his most bitter enemies.

A prominent citizen of Atchison once shot himself, and his widow believed that as a special friend of the family I should print nothing about the suicide. Because I could not grant the request, she long thought me a terrible man.

One of the best friends I ever had almost quarreled with me because I did not write more beautifully of an infant dead at birth. Two people cordially disliked me for years because I thought it best to mention very briefly and respectfully their shot gun marriage; they wanted a lot of details about bridesmaids and floral decorations when there was no such elaboration. Once a prominent man died, and our regular man wrote at length, and with reasonable ability, of the deceased. The widow did not like his literary style, and has cordially disliked me since because I refused to print

an entirely new account of the death next day. My experience has been that a newspaper inflames most of its readers in one way or another. If an editor lives long in a town, and is fairly well liked, it is as marvelous a thing as I know.

There were some credits in the record, including degrees conferred upon me by Rollins and Washburn Colleges, although I almost never attended school; I confess to feeling a little foolish when wearing cap and gown. In 1900 I was given, by the citizens of Atchison, a repeating gold watch. I quietly inquired around, and found it had cost $500. My private inquiry also developed that while our town, like all others, was greatly burdened with Committee collections, the watch fund was quickly and easily raised. Indeed, one man not called on was angry, and almost had a fight with a Committeeman because of the neglect. Still later, in the same way, a silver water set equally expensive was given me. The special occasion for these two gifts was a Corn Carnival I had invented and managed, and which became so noted during a series of years that the Strand magazine, of London, gave many pages of pictures to it, as did other prominent publications.

I found that I devoted much enthusiasm to organizing a local coal mining company, and lost ten thousand dollars of my hard-earned money in it. Progress sometimes involves loss in towns not well located as to natural advantages. Kansas City, fifty miles away, was dedicated by the Almighty to become a big and prosperous town. Ours was not so blessed, but scattered

all over this country are strong men we trained in Atchison: some of them have generously written me I had a part in affording good example and advice. One of these men has been a governor of Colorado, and once worked as a carrier boy on *The Atchison Globe.*

Another entry shows that the Republicans officially praised me for supporting McKinley in his first campaign for president, after the local Republican paper had deserted him for Free Silver, and that my county was the only one in the state that gave McKinley the usual Republican majority. There was also a suggestion of a nomination for Congress, which I did not encourage, as I have always disliked politics; but the Free Silver argument I vigorously opposed in an independent newspaper.

The files showed that the grave of an old enemy of mine, a really worthy and creditable man, was unmarked for several years, and that I organized a movement, and raised money, for the purchase of the monument which now marks his grave.

I found in looking over the old files of *The Atchison Globe* that I always had a disposition toward the paragraph form of writing. This was so marked that Dr. Frank Crane once referred to me, in a syndicate article appearing in fifty notable papers, as "The Sage of Potato Hill." This was after I had selected a beautiful spot three miles below town, purchased a hundred acres, and built a home for permanent occupancy when age forced me to quit daily newspaper work. I named the place Potato Hill, because so many similar homes were

called Oakhurst, Pinecrest, Chestnut Hill, etc. This was the first house I ever built that had two bathrooms. One of the early paragraphs in *The Atchison Globe* read: "A man rarely wants to go to the bathroom that he does not find a woman in it, or waiting to get in." At Potato Hill I had the best bedroom in Kansas, with private bath.

As to the view from the site I selected, and where I lived for some time, I quote a Philadelphia man who visited me: he wrote in the *Public Ledger* that it afforded one of the three most notable views on the American continent. One he located near Quebec: the location of the third I have forgotten. The Hubbards saw the view not long before they were lost on the "Lusitania": it was there I heard a laughing remark that they had been advised not to make the trip, as the war, then being waged, rendered such a journey dangerous. The incident amounted to no more than this, so far as I know; I have tried to recall more, on urgent request, and could not.

XXX

Although I have been married but once, and was divorced more than a quarter of a century ago, on the whole my family life has been fairly successful. As I do not like hotels, because of long experience with them in my youth, I have maintained the family home. For several years my house was managed by housekeepers, with considerable satisfaction. Nineteen years ago my brother Bruce's daughter Adelaide came to me, at the age of twenty, and has had charge of my household since. My children esteem her, as do others with whom we come in contact; and I have carried her to some remote places. At twenty she was a farmer's daughter, and the largest town she had seen was Omaha, across the river from Council Bluffs, Iowa, where she was born. Since then she has been around the world, and traveled repeatedly from one end of our own continent to the other. Her father and mother live next door when we are at home, in a house I built for my half-brother Jim, long since dead.

Although I have lived quietly and simply a good many years, I know a good deal about the tumultuous family life: when my children were little, we employed four servants, and kept horses, carriages, cows, dogs, chickens and cats. I think the old house would fall down with amazement if all should return. I live a very simple

life now, and the more I increase the simplicity, the more comfortable I am.

I did not get along with my brother Bruce when we were children. My objection to him was that he was a good boy. I did not object to this in my brother Jim, who never "told on me," but Bruce had that habit, and it often got me in trouble.

But as men—he is now seventy-one—I find I like him. Nearly every afternoon for some years we have worked together in field or garden, and I find him satisfactory and interesting. An old-fashioned man, perhaps he is the reason I admire old-fashioned people. I have heard him say he lives on seventy dollars a month, year after year, which astonishes me, since I know he lives well, being frequently his guest. He pays twenty-five cents a pair for his glasses: I had my lenses changed the other day, and was charged $20, but his eyes are as good as mine, except that I am older, and am getting my "second sight": more than half the time I do not use glasses at all, being able to comfortably read without them. Once my brother lost a pair of twenty-five cent glasses in the field, and was so disturbed that I helped him find them. During the war, when I paid $125 for a suit of clothes, I have known him to buy a very good suit for $18. And he is at least well enough dressed to be one of the most respected and popular citizens of the community in which we live.

I have a steam heating apparatus in my home, and last year its cost for November amounted to more than his fuel bill for the winter. He has a large heating stove

in his main living room, and uses the despised cottonwood in it. This he gets for $5 a cord, sawed and delivered: and he always sees that the farmer delivers a full cord. I have never bought a cord of wood without being robbed a little. He finds six cords sufficient for the average winter, with a gas stove in the kitchen. One bedroom is heated from these two, and with the use of another stove when there is "company," the entire house of six rooms is comfortable in the coldest weather. On retiring at night, he "beds down" the big wood-burning stove in a manner which keeps the water pipes from freezing, and attracts my admiration. The conservatism of this retired farmer has helped me: it would help other town men.

He takes and reads three daily newspapers, and though I rarely hear of his buying a book or magazine, he is better informed than the average man: his education is so extensive as to be creditable to the newspapers. A son and daughter are married, and live on farms; he rarely visits them that he does not "take them something" from his own garden in town. He once kept hens, but concluded to get rid of them. Five could not be caught, and last spring, when we returned from Florida, he supplied us with eggs.

The man is a marvel to me, for his disposition is as unusual as his thrift: I have never known him to be ill-humored, to sleep badly, or be out of health. He has an automobile, telephone, electric lights and gas. When there is an exciting thing in the air, I go over to his house to hear returns on his radio. I do not care

for radio music, nor does he; but his wife does, so their son installed one as a present.

I have never known a man more respected by his children. His son, who is a prosperous farmer, takes him on long automobile trips, so he sees as much of life as he cares for, with enough laid away for the future. If in the days of his activity he ever had an income exceeding $1,500 a year, I have not heard of it. Nothing interests me more now than this plain man's successful life. Bernard Shaw wrote recently that every man with an income of less than three thousand dollars a year should be put to death. I feel it is a pity so noted a man should write such reckless absurdity.

Five children have been born to me. The first two died in the same week, less than a year after my arrival in Atchison, of diphtheria, not then under as much control as at present. I will only say of the dreadful event that it gave me an insight into the goodness of the people I have never forgotten. If I love Atchison devotedly it is because its people were kind to me during that hot August in 1878; and have been ever since. Twenty years ago I made a trip around the world, and wrote a book about it which at least attracted sufficient attention to warrant a new edition and type in 1927. The critics generally noted my frequent prayers at sacred places in Palestine, Japan, India, China, etc., for my fine neighbors, and my longing to be back among them. I am loyal to my home town because I have reason to be.

The other three children are alive and well, and

creditable. My only daughter married Dwight T. Farnham, of 5 Gramercy Park, New York, seventeen years ago, and is accepted as a successful woman by those who know her. Only recently she won a $10,000 prize with her first novel, "Rebellion."

My oldest son has long been with the Associated Press abroad, and I hear only good reports of him. During the late troubled times he had experiences at sea, on the battle front, in Germany, Russia, Poland, few correspondents have equaled.

Another son is editor and publisher of three daily newspapers: two in Amarillo, Texas, and the one in Atchison I founded fifty-one years ago. This youngest son presented me with my only grandchild, a girl. Her parents did their best to spoil her, in the modern way, and I dreaded to have her come in my house, but lately, at the age of eleven, she is becoming a lady, and saving herself. Girl children usually do that. I went so far lately as to invite her up to stay all night, and like her better every day.

I believe I may truthfully say I have good children, and they have given me much evidence of affection. I sometimes almost hope—and I analyze myself harshly in old age—that I was a good father in the days when my children were at home.

The nearest approach to that beautiful thing, an angel, is a little girl of ten or twelve. Women of sixteen or twenty, and into the shadowy regions beyond, are of course adorable, but when my only daughter was twelve I loved her so much that frequently I took her

on long trips that I might have her all to myself. We went through Yellowstone Park in the days when I believe she was the prettiest and most adorable child in the world, and I a young husband and father. To-day I stood before a picture taken in that remote time, and walked away almost in tears; we have both so greatly changed.

We went into the park too early, and I still recall that the women lent her wraps, and glared at me, thinking I wasn't taking good care of her. But I was: in our joint lives it was our best and happiest time. How she trusted me, loved me, admired my wisdom, looked after me, blessed me! One old fellow said:

"Sir, I congratulate you on the most adorable little daughter I have seen in years. I don't want to be disagreeable, but let me tell you what happened to mine: she married, and I hardly know her now."

I recall that one night we were on a Pullman, and worrying because we should be compelled to get out at a lonely station in Montana at two o'clock in the morning, to wait for another train. Then we were told we could move into another car and proceed on our journey without disturbance. We made the change, and I went into the smoking room. When I was ready for bed, I found my night clothes laid out; every loving thoughtfulness was shown me by the sleeping angel in the next berth. And she was almost a baby.

I've traveled far, and haven't much farther to go, but have discovered nothing equal to love. And no wife ever loved a husband as a girl of twelve loves her

father. There is a trustfulness and admiration no grown woman has for a man. A girl of twelve hasn't found the men out; a woman of sixteen is beginning to, and I blush when I think of what women of twenty and beyond think of us; most of it true.

Manlike, I do not know my daughter's birthday; I do not know her exact age, but remember distinctly when she loved me most: when she was not a day over twelve.

Then she went away to school; we had friends in Washington, who gave her "advantages." It was during this time that I found something in one of her letters that was "managing" rather than loving and trusting, as I had been accustomed to. All women go on the war-path around fourteen, and fight the men until they die. I long for an armistice, but do not expect one.

I took her on a trip around the world to celebrate her graduation with honor, but was grouchy most of the way: she had become a woman: I had lost her, and knew it. My first shock was noting that she could be content out of my sight. On the trip we met young army and navy officers, and agreeable American travelers, and they were able to entertain her. Before I had felt, in a foolish, sentimental way, that she regarded me as the only man in the world really worth while. I should have known better even then, but did not.

On that trip I felt about my heart as I later felt about my eyes when compelled to put on glasses. Now that I better understand the old prophetic saying about three-

score and ten, I am beginning to realize that old age begins somewhere around forty.

I suppose she loves me now, but it is with that suspicion adults always have, and must have, for each other: the glory of the child has departed. I am proud of her, but it is in the distant way we are proud of old and honorable conquests. None of my children have been in the house where they were born, except as guests, in almost twenty years, and I am a little afraid of all of them.

In the old days when the children went with their mother to the seashore for the hot months, it is one of my dearest memories that when opportunity presented, the youngest came home to remain with me. How easily I "regulated" him! How well we "got along!" Even now, when he is forty-two I am shown evidences of affection that fathers less fortunate would not believe in a poem. I am fortunate as to my children, and grateful.

The world has decided a gentleman may not tell his side of a controversy with a lady, and as my former wife was that, I shall observe the conventions. Perhaps I will be excused for saying our friends generally agree that our divorce was a success, if such a thing is possible. There was no scandal, and separation resulted in no disturbance in the life of either party, except to improve it. Divorce was granted on the application of my wife, abandonment being charged, which was true to the extent that I lived in the house in the yard now occupied by my brother Bruce.

We mutually agreed on an amount I should pay, and this contract was performed punctually. When these payments were met, and there was no longer legal obligation, without suggestion from anyone I continued the payments, and do to this day. My relations with my father-in-law continued so cordial after the divorce that it was publicly remarked by Kansas newspapers.

I have always been able to get along with women rather well, except as a husband; I do not believe I have much genius in that direction. No one has heard me say I would have been an ideal husband differently situated, and have never had a desire to try the experiment a second time. I enjoy home and children as much as anyone, but unless wife and husband are well suited to each other, there are difficulties in marriage I have found greater than in any other phase of life. Possibly divorce causes me my greatest regret, but I have no doubt it was best for both of us. Being married, in many of its phases, is almost as mean and necessary an experience as being born, dying, correcting children, eating food and getting rid of it. I have been husband, son and father, and sometimes think I have had most reason to blush as a husband.

I have been accused of being "a woman hater"; of making too light of women, sentiment, spirituality. The truth is, I think too much of all these. I am actually the most sentimental of men; the grand gallantry which has distinguished the world has impressed me: I believe a lot of the compliments, in spite of my knowledge that the world does not mean half of them. I have

assisted in building a false story, and almost believed it.

If the world would pardon complete candor, I might write a book of some benefit to it: not because I am wise, but because I have made so many mistakes I am willing to acknowledge. In writing these memoirs I am frequently confronted with the necessity of cutting out what should go in, if an old man's book is to be of any real value.

I have often thought that if I could have the writing translated into Russian, then into French, and then into English (that my connection with it could not possibly be known) I might be able to write a book of value, and without writing anything untrue or unfit for human eyes. The trouble with all of us is we do not acknowledge our bad habits, or realize the profit and comfort in improving them.

I have a tremendous awe of a marriage ceremony. Now that I am not a married man, I find myself trying to be a good husband. Nothing would induce me to distress my former wife. Although we have not seen each other, or had any communication whatever in more than a quarter of a century, our relations have been genteel. If I should learn that she wished a certain thing done, I should do it, if within my power; and am certain she would do as much for me. We are actually two fairly worthy old people who should not have married each other, but who have a good deal of respect for an old union now that it has been dissolved. If there was bitterness on both sides when we were man and wife, it has entirely disappeared: in its place has appeared a

kindness more like ourselves before we knew each other.

As this is a permanent record, I find I have disposition to write that after the appearance of my daughter's book, "Rebellion," she printed a card in the newspapers saying her story had no reference to her own father. As a girl she ruled us all agreeably and to our benefit: she did not marry a carpenter, but a fine business man we all approved and admired—nor was there a fierce father in her early history who kept from his daughter a large (or any other) sum inherited from her mother.

The most agreeable thing men find in life is women, and I often wish that their association might somehow result in fewer tragedies, heartaches and worries. I have punished and been punished so much that in the latter days of my journey I find myself sincerely hoping that those who come after me may find easier traveling, but have no plan to offer. So many suggestions that cannot be accomplished are offered in everything that I sometimes think our attempts at impossible reforms disturb us more than anything else.

CHAPTER XXXI

I HAVE so frequently heard the old are disposed to unreasonable fault finding, and am myself so elderly, that I often consider the question with as much justice as has been shown me: more is nobleness I have not reached.

What are the mental processes of those seventy years old and beyond? Do they intelligently appraise the lessons of life, and with reasonable fairness? Do they dread to die, or are they indifferent? Do they wish to leave trouble or peace behind them? Do they have contempt for themselves and others, turn state's evidence, and testify in a manner annoying to those younger?

At the age of seventy-five one may almost say death is staring him in the face. I do not think about it a great deal, nor with much regret. I wish to live as long as I am fairly comfortable, and able to care for myself, but for freedom from painful illness would be willing to trade a considerable number of years of old age. I do not hope for a very protracted life; probably most of the old are ready before called, and impatient of the delay.

A man older than I am, and one of some distinction, as he has been governor of his state, told me lately he is now enjoying life more than ever before. I recall the thought coming into my mind that he did not mean it, as he was ill at the time, and very miserable. Saying

things "to be nice" is religion with some people. I have better health than I once thought possible at seventy-five; when I take care of myself, I am on the whole quite comfortable. I know what I should do as well as the famous Mayos could advise me; I have no doubt, if I knew the Mayos, I could give them advice that would benefit them. But applying wisdom is difficult; nature has so long been indulgent that I find being careful a heavy task, although exercising a considerable measure of it. I still like to mingle with people, and like them, but do not find life more enjoyable now than ever before. Mentally I note no special slipping except that I am not able to work as easily as I once did. I do not sleep well, and have not for forty years. The result is a nervousness that disturbs me, although it does not seem to affect my health. When I cannot cure myself by observance of rules that should be known to everyone, I shall realize that probably no one can help me.

I have imposed on a good many during my long life, and a good many have imposed on me; on the whole, I conclude I have been a victim no more frequently than I have victimized—I sometimes believe, and always hope, rather less. Everyone imposes somewhat on his community, his family, his friends, and should pay back a good deal. This I have endeavored to do, having found it the easiest way. I shall leave the world believing that its greatest mistake has been in teaching that worthy men bear a specially heavy cross. There are crosses for all of us, but those best behaved carry the

lighter ones. This is my strongest conviction, and has been since forty or fifty years old. I sincerely regret I did not learn the lesson earlier.

I have always been disposed to believe that what I call "my luck" has been atrocious, but admit now, after a fair survey of the field, that I have had more good luck than bad. On a few occasions I have had good luck that amounted to more than all the petty bad luck I ever had: it seemed as if Luck was ashamed to treat anyone as cruelly as threatened, and apologized with a burst of generosity.

Much is said of the baseness and falsity of men in their attitude toward women. I believe I have loved women as sincerely as women have loved me, and been as fair with them. It is not probable that half the human family is of one material, and the other half of another. I have uttered as fine compliments for women as anyone, but am not sure now I was not in mischievous mood when uttering them. It is a human quality to overdo fine things, and probably gallantry has been overdone more than anything else. Overdoing is our greatest fault, but we regard it as our greatest virtue.

On the whole, I marvel most in old age that there is no advance in morals. Since we have been teaching from the beginning the importance of better behavior, why have we done no better in this respect than early ancestors, although advancing enormously in other ways? In most things I can come to some final conclusion, but here I do not know, and cannot find out.

The carelessness, shiftlessness, meanness, which distinguish us are not natural: the lower animals do not practice it; they are only cruel from necessity, while we are mischievous as an amusement. I often note the English sparrows constantly about my door. They seem to be good to each other, except a few slight exhibitions of temper. They are always busy, always thrifty, always neat. They know enough to eat and drink moderately; they have no poor, no sick, no wars, no idle. Sex is no problem with them: merely a natural incident in their lives, and naturally disposed of; but mankind is almost at war trying to reform habits the other animals never had. I do not understand it, since I believe as firmly in the greater comfort in morals as I believe in the greater comfort afforded by a railroad train compared with a stage coach.

I thought I understood sentiment when young, but do not now. If there is an important message in sentiment, it is denied me; not because I so will, but because of rude necessity. I indulge in it, but always with the realization that it is not important. I am unable to understand those who invest great effort and capital in sentimentality. In appraising them, I may at times be unjust, because I do not, and cannot, understand them. The greatest credit I give is to the more able of the materialists, who follow the truth fairly and intelligently wherever it leads, that they may make it as merciful as possible. The men of no other nation in world history have been as badly henpecked as are the

men of the United States. Is this to our credit or discredit? Has it resulted in more capable women? My readers must decide; I do not know.

I do not understand the religion of some others, as they do not understand mine, but have what is called "natural religion." If I pass a church and faintly hear the organ and choir, I have heard a sermon that does me good. Once when abroad and visiting many cathedrals, the soft music, the impressive ceremonies, the peal of bells, the smoking censors, the pictures, the entire absence of preaching, wrangling and collections, almost induced me to join; most of all I was impressed with the ceremonies of the Russian church, the doctrines of which I know least. When I have slept well, feel well, and been as good a man as it is possible for me to become, I almost feel like falling on my knees, and offering a prayer of thankfulness, but have not yet accepted any of the dogmatic creeds.

Human advice is not very important except as offered by a decade or a century; I have none to offer specially my own. No one has all the worthiness, all the wisdom, or has had all the experience; everyone has some, and displays it with his folly. From this babbling men learn the final lessons of greatest use. The old of a thousand years ago, a hundred years ago, of to-day, have almost agreed finally on certain simple rules and facts of life. These afford the only advice I recommend.

I am not one of those who regard the old days as better than the new. The wonderful days, the days of most comfort, intelligence, of kindness and helpfulness,

are being lived now. Possibly men of to-day are neglecting some of the old lessons I was compelled to learn more thoroughly because of harder circumstances, but of this I am not sure: it is another of the questions I cannot answer. I am proud of the men who have gone so far while I have remained in the country. That they are useful to the world I know, for they are useful to me: every day I am obliged to someone smarter than I have been. This is not toadyism; I have examined myself carefully: it is honest respect. That men have done the best they can I do not doubt, and they have done surprisingly well. It is not fair to say they might have done better in the face of so much accomplishment.

A lie is a special shame on the lips of an old man, therefore when I say I am grateful in my later years, it is the truth as near as it is ever told: I doubt anyone can be entirely truthful in telling his story. The world has treated me as well as I have treated it. I sometimes grumble because the people do not do better, but marvel more that they have done as well as they have, there is so much natural evil: the people have overcome so much of it, I only grumble because they have not overcome more, since improvement over our original condition pays such generous rewards. That there are thieves, drunkards, wantons and idlers is another of my unsolved problems; I do not know why anyone consents to be thoroughly wretched when opportunity abounds for fairly agreeable lives. Natural depravity is no better established than that much of it may be overcome. When I meet disagreeable persons my first regret

is they have not met kind and intelligent people, as I have, able to convince them that bad conduct is the long, disagreeable, difficult and unprofitable way of getting through life.

The really smart men are so much smarter than I am that I have never been very conceited; considering the human weakness that must be admitted, it is marvelous to me that anyone is.

Judging from my own experiences, I have concluded a man's life is largely determined at birth: by the strength, weakness and characteristics inherited from his ancestors. The popular notion is that one may grimly resolve and achieve greatness and usefulness in spite of natural handicaps, but my secret opinion has long favored the old Presbyterian doctrine of predestination, somewhat liberalized. Although close association with my father ceased when I was thirteen or fourteen years old, and I never knew my mother's people except as a child, I am able now to detect in my character strong habits they possessed. An uncle with whom I associated intimately as a boy, as he was of about my age, exaggerated everything; if he saw twenty prairie chickens, he said there were two hundred in the flock. I find as a man I am much like him, but have been punished so regularly for bad habits that for many years I have been disposed to reduce twenty to fifteen. I try to be truthful, but find it difficult; all men are liars, and I am as certain of others as of myself. I do not doubt one may hopefully struggle against bad habits: some more than others. I am tremendously care-

less, and try to overcome it, but my success has been, on the whole, humiliating. I have been attempting many years to write maxims. The one I believe most important is: "Be careful, and you will save many from the sin of robbing you." I have not been that careful myself. The old Howes and Irwins hit me pretty hard in spots, but in others they were generous: I think my fairly good health at seventy-five is a blessing from the Irwins. My father died around seventy-four as strong mentally as he ever was. I think I inherited this blessing from him.

I do not believe there ever was a man who wished to leave the world worse than he found it. Everyone would rather be philanthropist than villain; the ill-behaved have somehow gone wrong when they might have succeeded with better behavior, and they hope, I believe, to finally get out of the dumps, and apologize with a burst of goodness. Every bad man is angry because he is not a good man. Those of us who know nothing, and talk as if we know everything, propose many remedies to help the totally depraved, but I do not believe any such exist.

In thinking of the world and humanity in old age, I am not certain about a good many things; some days I am of one opinion, and some another. But I pretty steadily believe that there is more tolerance for the ill-behaved in 1929 than ever before. I recall a time when good women were more particular than they are now in admitting questionable characters to their society. Likewise I observe that questionable men find

more charity everywhere; both bad symptoms which distress me.

I think the greatest regret of my life is that I have not behaved better and amounted to more, since I believe I might have done this, and found more enjoyment in life. By "behaving better" I refer to no secret crimes I have committed, for I have committed none; I mean no more than failure to use knowledge I might have gained from long association with excellent people. And there are always excellent people available among the many trifling ones. I do not ask young people to behave like old men and women, which isn't natural, and they won't do it. I only aim to kindly inform them that there is much truth in the warnings of the old, and that if the young will do a *little* better in temperance, politeness, and good conduct generally, the rewards will be great: specially in a year, a decade. And I kindly insist that, in the long run, good behavior is easier than bad. I only ask that the young test my theories of life for themselves, and see if it isn't true. If not, let it be rejected; I do not wish to write anything that is mischievous or untrue.

The other day I encountered a man preaching from a Gospel Wagon, and wondered what specialty I would adopt should I conclude it was my duty to travel about as an evangelist. I decided I would preach the importance of everyone behaving better, and say nothing about general sin. The great hope is individual reform: so far as I am impatient with the churches it is because

they have the best opportunity to preach this important sermon, and neglect it.

I have friends I almost worship, they are so patient with me; so there are good friends, but one must look for them, cultivate and cherish, and pay back a good deal. With a few friends I have never had a disagreement, after long association; and I do not expect more of human nature than I have found.

Recently a woman fell in love with a man, and pursued him to his home, where she insisted on staying. While there, the man's wife and daughter died under suspicious circumstances, and the neighbors gossiped so much that the woman was arrested. Later she was acquitted, and the papers said gossip should be ashamed of itself. It seems to me that in this case gossip was well within its rights. Gossip is vicious, but nevertheless I believe something may be said in its defense. Evil itself finds evil long before the sheriff does. Gossip is forever turning state's evidence, and asking no immunity: the neighbors, willing to be vicious gossips, are often valuable missionaries. Gossip is nature's police system.

Dr. Murray Butler says no great men are living today, although every other age had outstanding human performances. The men of the last century have accomplished more wonderful things than all others combined; a hundred things might be named to shame the ancients. No reasonable man can doubt that men of today are the smartest that ever lived, and not much

worse in their morals. This is a perfectly natural conclusion: knowledge is experience, and modern men have had the benefit of most experience. Men idle too much in predicting great things for the future. There will be improvements in the ages to come, but by the time they are perfected and generally accepted, we will be tired of them, and demanding better conditions.

I rarely read without finding a fresh and more vigorous attack on Democracy: the gloomy Dean Inge said lately it is becoming plain that democracy has done its work—that it is a most wasteful and unstable form of government, and a luxury we cannot afford. Are we so worthless we cannot govern ourselves? I believe so much in human rights that I cannot imagine myself submitting willingly to king or dictator; I so much admire the people I cannot quite admit they must have a master. Slavery has been found objectionable; slaves rebel so often that an intelligent system of liberty has been found to work better. There are many evidences that the people are not doing well with democracy: the great excesses in human history have been due to too much of it. The old Romans wrecked a democratic government: a dictator rescued them. The Russians are murdering themselves and democracy; the reign of terror in France ended only because of the iron hand of a dictator. There is reason back of this general fear of democracy. If I long for anything with patriotic fervor it is that the people of the United States may learn to govern themselves so well they will never be disgraced by a dictator. And if we do this, we

must behave better. We are grossly offending nature. The only remedy is for the people themselves to better appreciate the blessings of democracy, which always fails in the hands of a shiftless, idle, unfair people.

The quarrel between parents and children has gone on for ages, but is more evident now, because Liberty is better established every decade. I have been child and parent, and believe parents are nearer in the right than children; that parents do more for children than children for parents. My father was a hard man, but did more for me than I did for him: his natural active responsibility to me lasted thirteen or fourteen years, certainly; mine to him only three or four years, it so happened. The young should be kind to the old not because the old always deserve it, but to continue the custom of helpfulness to those handicapped by years. The young will soon be old, and in need of a well-established family and community tradition that those incapable of helping themselves are entitled to patience and help from those still vigorous.

Anyone who thinks at all seriously and accurately soon realizes that there are two crowds in the world: one thinking somewhat as he does, and the other in an entirely different way. I long ago decided I belonged in the minority crowd, since I believe in accepting the facts of life, as the most efficient way of meeting them; apologize, and be ashamed, certainly, but admit the facts. When a man goes into a field to devote a day's work to producing food crops for his needs, he labors with intelligence, and accepts world experience. There

is an agreed time to plant and harvest, and he follows this knowledge: in everything, while in the field, he works as effectively as possible, and accepts all information that has been tried out in the centuries. He finds truth an asset: folly troublesome and expensive. But the same man, if he belongs in the big crowd, on going to church, lodge, political convention or social affair, is apt to change his attitude, and deny fact and experience in half he does. I believe there is profit in the philosophy of little things, but not much in the ponderous kind. I believe philosophy most concerns life while we are living it: to the effect of food on the stomach, mind and disposition; to the effect of our conduct on everyday surroundings.

We have so many well-to-do in the United States that a distaste for being an employe has grown up, I sometimes think. In my younger days men did not regard it as bemeaning to accept a job, for there was always the hope of giving satisfaction and of advancing. Frequently employes became partners in the business: always, if worthy, they advanced from subordinate position to more important one. That was the way we advanced in that day: we learned a trade, tried to become good at it, and advance when possible, as it usually was. And I never knew anyone to object to the system. The old fellow who had young men under him usually began as they did, and took an interest in them, if they were worthy, and improved in their work, as workmen should with longer experience. But lately I am noting a difference. The independence of employes is frequently

offensive to me, and I do not easily take offense in presence of ordinary politeness and service. The objectionable air on the part of the workmen is an attitude which seems to say: "Because I am employed it does not mean I lack knowledge of my rights or spirit to defend them." My attitude toward the workers is always friendly, since I recall my own long days as an employe. I like to go into business places, and note the younger men specially capable, and therefore not far from promotion. I also note the old fellows who are wearing out, and must soon have successors. Usually they are the bosses, and I hope they were thrifty during their years as employes, and will be able to gracefully accept when younger men are promoted over them, as a natural necessity. I love good machinery in the office as well as in the shop; I have been familiar with both all my life, and when there is improvement, as there usually is, it interests and pleases me. I have worked for five dollars a week and board; if a man now gets ten times as much, and earns it, it pleases me, as evidence that my race is improving. When the men of a nation have improved steadily, that nation offers more comfortable conditions of living. And I specially do not object in any way to the young fellow who is beginning where I began; I specially hope he may be able to avoid many of my mistakes, and succeed better. I like independence, but it should not go so far as to be offensive to old employes who have become foremen, superintendents and owners, as I regret to believe it frequently is in these modern days.

I am not uncharitable with the young, but events in their lives, formerly interesting to me, I now find dull. I do not believe that when young I was better disposed than young people of to-day, but sometimes believe parents, neighbors and the world were less generous in forgiveness in my youth, and whipped more. I have admitted to myself, and without much difficulty, that I am tiresome to the young; probably I am not as "good a fellow" as I was when hopeful and full of promises. Recently I was held up at a telegraph counter, with a death message in my hand, by a girl clerk idly talking with a young loafer who interested her. I suppose I was less patient with the incident than I would have been thirty years ago. Every day I am hurt a little by unnecessary reference to my age. A common form of offending is the remark: "How well you are looking!" when no reference should be made to looks. That form of politeness always causes me to believe my acquaintance has remarked I am not looking well. Almost hourly someone says to me: "Of course I am not as old as you are, but—"; there are many other forms of this thoughtlessness. I was admiring a pretty child, as I often do, and the young mother said: "Won't you shake hands with Grandpa?" But I am becoming used to it, and generally disposed, I hope, to fairness to the young. So far as I am neglected by anyone because of my age, I rather like it. The other evening I had opportunity to attend a dinner where there were to be young women as entertainers, real wine, and several notable guests. I expressed a wish to meet the guests,

and later did, but declined the dinner and the display of youth; remaining at home suited me better. Clarence Darrow, the old criminal lawyer, called on me recently, and somewhat reminded me of myself, as he was quiet, and tired of the burly burly. "What's the use talking?" his manner seemed to say; a question I had often asked. He charitably told me of his favorite abominations, and I told him of mine, but we did not argue anything, or indulge in severe criticism. Altogether I find old age easier than anticipated.

Frequently I read of men who are original thinkers. I have detected so many of these in expressing old thought that I have concluded there is almost no such thing as an original thinker. For thousands of years men have been thinking, and men rarely keep their thoughts to themselves. If you have what you call a new thought, you are very apt to find later it was uttered long ago. What is called new thought to-day is usually old thought abandoned because it was not reliable.

Why is it that every man has an ambition to make a success of life? Probably because he knows success is a standard by which men are judged. Except in cases of inheritance or gross luck, a well-to-do man represents something besides money. He usually represents a lot of hard, intelligent and useful work: saving, politeness, capacity to handle the tools of a necessary trade a little better than is the rule. There is a high and low caste in this country, as in India, but anyone may get into the high caste here. In our

country children are not born to the purple; the matter of caste is settled after birth. The young fellow who practices the simple virtues, and is polite and industrious, becomes a high caste man; the young fellow given to bad habits becomes a low caste man, whatever his birth may have been.

How I have idled, sinned, and made mistakes! How I have neglected the rules of health! How I have rushed heedlessly into dangerous places, in spite of red lanterns plainly displayed! And here I am, an old fellow with enough; more friends than I deserve. Others may have been charitable with me because they need charity; but they have shown charity.

I hear of men who are 100 per cent efficient. There are no such men; the best have weaknesses. It is true some rate higher than others, but if a man is 65 per cent efficient, I should say he does well. The average is lower: many run so low in efficiency that they cannot be catalogued with any certainty. Men become famous as they are efficient above 65 per cent.

When men speak of good behavior, they not only mean sobriety, fairness, politeness; they also mean some sort of usefulness and success in life. In the best sense, a useful and successful man is one who teaches the importance of good methods by demonstrating them. Then others follow his example, and better methods are encouraged.

The people of many nations have been able to accomplish reasonable justice among themselves, in their private affairs, but always in their public affairs there

has been a menace of half or wholly insane king, president, congressman, governor, county commissioner, city councilman, township trustee or road overseer, with troublesome regulations, prohibitions, parades, conventions. In most respects mankind grows wiser with civilization. This has not been true in public affairs. The greatest public extravagance in history must be credited to the present generation of rulers. Ours is the most fruitful country in existence, by common consent, but it may be necessary to put Uncle Sam through bankruptcy, and give the old gentleman a chance to do better in future. Of all Great Americans, Uncle Sam has benefited his country least. He has reversed the rule: he is a Prodigal Father to worthy sons. It must be admitted that Uncle Sam is not reasonably economical and sensible.

Civilization is a compact among men to fight savage nature. The man always in trouble, and of no use to anyone, is still a savage. Those who have good homes and jobs, and least troublesome in their communities, are civilized. Young people who annoy parents, men and women who annoy their neighbors, those who are liars, thieves, idlers, are still savages. The most conspicuous failure is the man whose birth cost money, care and travail, and then fails to pay his natural debt to parents. When a man reaches maturity, after all the trouble and expense he has caused in youth, he should give a note to his parents, and be punished if he fails to pay in helpfulness, kindness, after they are old.

The Big Men in literature make many absurd statements. One goes so far as to say there is really no reason why anything or anybody should die. No Big Man can interest me in such a story: he may say he has new evidence, but there is old evidence rendering the new ridiculous. A French "specialist," one Dr. Toulouse, declares that every man who makes a success in life is something of a fool. Such a statement may do well enough for literature, always too friendly to vagrancy, but fact is an entirely different thing. The fact is that those who get along, and do some sort of work regularly and creditably, are the better specimens of mankind, in thinking as well as in working and conduct. A man who decides to be an industrious, creditable citizen has been brought to that conclusion by intelligence. Dollar-chasing isn't a crime, but a virtue. If the idlers now disturbing the world should become dollar-chasers, and develop factories, farms, erect buildings, extend transportation lines, it would be a blessing. Dollar-chasing is commendable. The man who gets in the bread line, because of too much mental activity and not enough physical, is a mild sort of criminal for whom there should be punishment, that he may perform better in future. There is much to argue about, and we do not neglect the opportunity, but at least one thing has been settled. It is that if a man will behave reasonably well, he may get along reasonably well. Everything in experience, history, proves it. The story of every successful man is the same in essential details; he began work young, stuck to it, was reliable, depend-

able, and efficient. He was polite, fair, and had respect for the lessons of experience. The story has been told so often that it greatly enrages the loafers, and they make fun of it, but it is true; here is one fact to depend upon.

The big critics frequently consign us plain people to the devil. Well, we'll not go. There are thousands in our crowd who amount to more than they do, and we have proven it. Our affairs are more important than theirs; and we have proven that, too. We have found an aim in life, a goal, and occasionally reach it. Our man Abe Lincoln amounted to more than any dozen of the big critics who abuse us. And there are other good men coming on along the various Main Streets, and out in the country a few miles.

I often remark the plagiarism in philosophy. The philosophy of the ancients is finally so much like that of moderns that one man might have written it all in 1929. The experiences of mankind are so simple, and so much alike, that there is only one way to tell them. I lately read a book in which the author attempted to summarize the wisdom of all ages. Not only the noted philosophers were included, but the sayings of plain people persisting from age to age. All seemed anxious to give warning that will keep others out of trouble, and all insisted on the importance of good conduct; all advocated temperance, fairness, industry, sound education and thrift as first helps in making life as endurable as possible. Not one recommended theft, drunkenness or idleness, but all advocated the observ-

ance of simple, just rules. Without exception all declared man is master of his own destiny, and that, in helping himself, he should respect the plain rights of others. Here is no philosophy you have not long been familiar with, for the reason that there is no other worthy of the recollection of men. And here is comfort, also, for every man of common sense; a modern man with intelligence so excellent that he has attracted wide attention declares that "common sense, in a rough, dogged way, is technically sounder than the special schools of philosophy."

From the cradle to the grave all are students in the university of fact. The professors include policemen who arrest us under certain circumstances, and politely salute us under others; bankers who cheerfully loan us money under certain circumstances, or refuse to under others; foremen of shops who commend or condemn our work; merchants who extend us credit, or refuse it; ladies who smile or frown at our approach; newspapers which give us good notices or bad. Your diploma from this university is your standing at the bank and in the community. I have long been annoyed with that type of man who announces he is out of work, and wants to punish someone as a protest. My experience during a long life has been that a good workman pretty generally has a job, and, when he loses it through the misfortune or lack of ability on the part of an employer, is able to soon find another. I have even observed that there is clamor everywhere for specially capable workmen, and that employers pre-

fer to pay higher rather than lower wages. I know the poor from the inside, having long been one of them, but never have I known a law oppressing them because of poverty. Custom has always begged me to acquire an education, and offered abundant and honorable opportunity to improve my condition. The poor, for whom there is so much sympathy, are really taking the country; their children are usually taught industry, acquire good habits, and as a result often become rich. If the poor of this country are being ground down, it is being done by those who came up from poverty.

Men have long contended they are groping in the dark. The light of thousands of years really illuminates their way. Life is not such a complex thing we must experiment with it forever. The few simple truths we need are revealed every day. An industrious and worthy man will inevitably meet with many humiliations and punishments, but not so many as his neighbor, who knows the law only to disobey it. Success in life is actually easier than failure; if civilization is more desirable than savagery, this must be true.

CHAPTER XXXII

I HAVE been wondering if I shall be able to induce the reader to continue to the end of this writing, now not far away. Following are some of the paragraphs I have written during middle and old age, and they briefly state my opinions on almost every subject which concerns life and men. If the reader yawns and lays the book down, I have failed, for the most destructive criticism is indifference. The paragraphs have been arranged in the most unattractive form for the test:

Make new efforts, attempt to find better ways, certainly, but unless you have the best old thought as a basis, you will fail. A new thought is dangerous until people have had a chance to pick at it a hundred years. . . . Don't be discouraged. Fortify yourself with knowledge of your trade and of life; practice fairness, politeness, industry, thrift, and you may be the next dark horse to win. . . . I neglect so many duties I think I should die of mortification did I not promise to perform them to-morrow. . . . A panic is a whipping administered by nature to bring us to a realization of our limitations and absurdities. . . . I do not care to "fool" any man. When he discovers I have fooled him, he will do me more harm than my cunning did me good. . . . No man ever knows the few joys of living without some sort of success to his credit. Of all the games worth a candle, success is first. The greatest punishment is to be despised by your neighbors, the world and members of your family. . . . It will be necessary in

time for conservatives to control the radicals, who want not only to eat the nest egg, but the setting hens, and the addled eggs under them. . . . When a fantastically dressed man rides up and down the street in an open carriage, and invites you to hear him lecture, remember that he didn't go to all that trouble to amuse you. . . . People in big cities would behave better if they knew each other as well as do country people. In a country town a man hears gossip about his sin when coming home from it. . . . A Pessimist is foolish one way, and an Optimist is foolish the other. . . . You may talk all you please about patriotism and religion, but a right good love affair moves a man more than anything else. . . . There must be poverty to punish the shiftless, and encourage industry. . . . When behaving myself, I am rarely reprimanded by policemen, neighbors or newspapers. . . . A good scare is worth more to a man than good advice. . . . Half the promises people say were never kept, were never made. . . . The most patient man is entitled to grumble about some things. . . . It isn't sissy men who help women most, but rough, capable ones who can be caught and trained. . . . A man likes marvelous things; so he invents them, and is astonished. . . . War is so wicked, so unnecessary, so foolish, that I rather believe the people should be punished for submitting to it. . . . How few the penitentiaries and jails, which represent the punishments, contrasted with other buildings representing the rewards! Life is worth living if it is lived well. . . . The thing that distinguishes this country over any other is that a greater percentage of its poor may become well-to-do or distinguished. . . . Most of the

opinions you hear are wails. When a man talks, he is usually representing his prejudice, or his individual trouble. Few people condemn a thing only because it is wrong, or praise it only because it is right. . . . There is at least enough in love to keep everybody hopeful about it. . . . Gentlemen talk of government by the people, for the people, etc. There never was any such government; that was one of Abe Lincoln's jokes. . . . You can't get anything done unless you do it yourself. And usually you can't do it yourself very well. . . . A fairly decent man does not need a state or national law to keep him straight; his competitors and patrons usually attend to that. . . . I think I am better than the people who are trying to reform me. . . . I am afraid of my audience, there are so many mean and smart people in it. . . . Water at command, by turning a tap and paying a tax, is more convenient than carrying it from a free spring. . . . Except the flood, nothing was ever as bad as reported. . . . When I say "everybody says so," it means I say so. . . . The New Thought gentlemen are always demanding new conditions. There will be no new conditions; we must make better use of the old. . . . I have failed to take advantage of many opportunities, but the world has not failed in offering them. . . . We all fry in the pan a good deal, but it is at least better than jumping into the fire. . . . I do not enjoy gossip; I rejoice that thousands of indiscreet persons escape without my hearing of their indiscretions, providing they have been sufficiently scared to make them more careful and worthy in future. . . . It takes only half as much time to do a thing when it should be done as will be

required a week later. . . . Whoever created man made him too much of a lover, and neglected some other things. I often wonder I got through the mad age of sex at all. . . . I know what great admiration is, but know nothing of worship. I believe the word to be artificial: men do not worship anything or anybody. . . . The neighbors know a man better than Bradstreet, and they are reasonably fair in their judgments. If you are reliable, they say so; they may admit it grudgingly, but they admit it. If you are unreliable they say so, and have a right to warn others against you. . . . When you find a father who insists on ruling his family strictly and sensibly, he may be called an oppressor, but at least has children who are obedient, polite and capable, and who will probably amount to something in the world. Compared with the overindulgent parent, the oppressor in the home is a blessing. . . . Every successful man I have heard of has done the best he could with conditions as he found them, and not waited until next year for better. . . . There never was universal love; there never will be—it is doubtful if such a state would be desirable. Men hustling to do better than competitors they hate have done more for the world than the great souls who dream of universal love. . . . We elect certain men to big positions, and thereafter expect them to "do something" for us, whereas we should know that the net effect of the transaction is we have done something for them. . . . A man making a great row said to me lately: "I did not assert myself soon enough." There are millions of citizens who must finally assert themselves, and who are putting off the fuss too long. . . . Most people

find a great deal of fault with others, but none with themselves. I have always been disposed to take my share of the general blame: I'm ashamed of ourselves. . . . God, in His infinite mercy, is not so much interested in my behaving as I am myself. If I go wrong, God may dismiss me, along with millions of others, with a tear, but going wrong is a serious matter to me; I am punished. . . . An elderly woman called at a jail to see her son, a youth much given to bank robberies, shooting officers, and the like. "I feel in my heart," she said to the sheriff, "that I am largely responsible for his terrible position. From the day of his birth I petted and pampered him, and aided very materially in his ruination." The world is full of such cases, but I have never before known a woman to confess quite so publicly. . . . I have not known a very poor man who was a good worker, or who had the ordinary habits of thrift which should distinguish the average man. . . . We are not free; it was never intended we should be. A book of rules is placed in our cradle, and we never get rid of it until we reach our graves. Then we are free, and only then. . . . Women and children greatly influence every man. They are gentler and more innocent, and men are always hiding disagreeable truths from them. But there are times when the women and children should go in the house while the men discuss or settle a good many rough matters out in the yard. With all their charm and beauty, women and children are responsible for millions of shiftless men: they always want many things the husband and father cannot afford, and be a thrifty and saving man. I call on the men to be thrifty, and prepare for a rainy day, in

spite of the protests of their women and children. Men should be as liberal as possible, but not so liberal as to wreck themselves and everyone connected with them. Everything connected with the American Spirit too much encourages extravagance, shiftlessness. . . . I have never been one of those severe critics who expect the people to be without faults. All I recommend is reasonable effort in getting rid of the worst ones, and decent attempt to hide the remainder. . . . Every man is better for being watched. Put your affairs unreservedly in any hands, and your agent will exact the best of it, when he might have been fair if watched and frequently checked up. . . . I do not know what should be done with the man who cannot get a job, or cannot hold one when he gets it. He has always been a problem, and always will be, on the hands of the industrious. But I do not believe we should hang those who find work, and who perform it with reasonable satisfaction. . . . The men in pursuit of money make less trouble than the big idealists with their experiments. When men start out to make money, there is always some salvage: they pay out a great deal in experiments, and probably more than half of them get no profit. Those who succeed employ men, and the labor unions see that fair wages are paid, but the money appropriated to oblige the big idealist is often wasted. . . . I am able to make a guess at most things, but when it comes to war, I know nothing. Ordinarily men have a good deal of respect for their lives and their pocketbooks, but in war they will forget both. We have come to know the weakness of the rich and great, but the plume and sword of the officer, the loud noise of the big gun, the screaming

shell, the destruction of towns, and mass murder, are as powerful now in making fools of men as they ever were. Many dignitaries have been reduced to weaklings, but the General has increased his dreadful power. . . . Bad women have their uses: were women all good, men would be completely insane over love. . . . The most worthless man, who never gets a compliment from his neighbors, may get one from orator or newspaper. . . . I doubt the natural nobleness of men: they are trained animals that should be watched. When you cannot lock them up at night, lock your own doors. . . . A man very careless in his own morals may have the highest ideals for the guidance of the world. . . . It is a favorable circumstance that the fact is being widely admitted that the people ask too much. The corporations waste millions every year in protecting their properties from burglaries attempted by men fairly honest with their neighbors. A supreme court lately held that the utilities commission is too great a friend of the people to be able to decide what rates a railroad should charge. It is the wisest, fairest decision handed down by a court in a long time. . . . I cannot pay the man working for me as much as he thinks he is entitled to. I can only pay him what he earns, and I am entitled to as much credit for giving him work as he is entitled to credit for working for me: I am as much a working man as he is, as honest, and equally entitled to protection and respect. . . . Big Business, Capital, should be made as clean as human things can be. Give the poor, customers, workingmen, not only justice, but a little more, but never so much that useful and necessary business, capital, will be crippled. There is no leader

in Big Business, no man who may fairly be called a Capitalist, not now realizing that the poor and the workingman should be treated fairly; that such course is wisest and best also from the standpoint of efficiency. There is no profit in injustice or trickery; slavery is not economic. Slaves are such a nuisance that had there been no statesmen advocating emancipation, men would have given up slavery to get rid of the never-ending row. Slavery is a nuisance not only to slaves, but to masters. Everywhere men are still mean enough to own slaves, but experience shows that slaves are not worth owning: the poor work they do, their constant wailing and rebellion, have always suggested emancipation. . . . Every man who writes or speaks of our present Social System gives the impression that it is a great wrong that should have been remedied long ago; everybody seems to believe changes might be made that would result in easier living. Our present competitive system is as necessary, as firmly founded in experience, as our system of eating three meals a day. A few say two meals a day would be better, but the great majority find three more convenient and efficient. No one will be able to suggest laws that will work better. The only hope is for all of us to assist a little in better obeying old laws. . . . I have something to say in my county and town. Councilmen and commissioners respect my rights somewhat, but the president I vote for, and assist in electing, is inaccessible in far-away Washington. This is the man who assigns me my most difficult and dangerous tasks; who orders me to engage in war, and, as long as I live, taxes me to pay its cost. I could have possibly coaxed my county commissioners and town

councilmen out of the war notion, but could do nothing with my president: he was too far off. If a prophet appears in my county or town, I may see him, hear him talk, and judge his performances, but if he appears in Washington or Arabia, my information about him is inevitably vague, and liable to be unreliable. . . . We should all pretend to be a little better than we are, in public; we should have a display window, as the storekeepers have, and exhibit our best goods. We should have ideals we cannot quite reach; we should all be a little high-minded, and accomplish a little of the greater good. Possibly everyone should know a few lines of poetry, exaggerate every good thing a little, and hover cautiously around the various higher things, but should not go so far from the shores of reality that he may not paddle back to safety. We can't wear our Sunday or company clothes all the time; we must put on working suits, and attack the weeds and the mud holes. . . . When a man is twenty years old, his youth is his capital. At sixty a part of his capital should be money or property: savings during the years of his strength and youth. A young fellow should be ashamed to protest because an old gentleman has laid away something to care for himself during inevitable rainy days. . . . All philosophy I read makes too much or too little of men: I know of no really great thinker who has reached a reasonably just and simple estimate of my problems. Either he confuses and discourages me with talk of tremendous duties I am not equal to, or says I am a greater slave, fool or nonentity than I am. Any law enjoining me to love my enemy is too much duty. Love is not the foundation of the law; Cicero was mistaken in

so declaring. The foundation of the law is knowledge born of the experience of vicious men that, with all its restrictions and injustices, law is easier than license. . . . The Italians have lately engaged in revolution for industry, fairness, politeness, efficiency, thrift: not because these are noble virtues, but because long experience has recommended them. The revolution in Italy, in a way, is like idlers engaging in revolution for the privilege of honest work; like drunkards fighting for sobriety; like outlaws coming down from the hills, and fighting for the privilege of becoming honest men, having found outlawry a mistake. . . . I expect to hear next that a man has sued a banker because the banker refused him a loan. Pathetic and moving scenery might be erected behind such a suit: that the plaintiff offered ample security; that his reputation suffered because of the refusal of the banker to make the loan; that the banker belongs to a Money Trust organized to keep up prices, rob the poor, etc. Why should not Cash Stores everywhere be sued for refusing credit? . . . A man must work his way by merit to control of a factory. We can't give it to him merely to be good fellows. Ownership of a factory is not the main thing: the main thing is successful operation. And only good workmen, and fairly sensible and honest men, can meet payrolls and provide markets. . . . We moan about those enjoying Special Privilege. There is no such thing in the United States, except the special privilege we all enjoy as Americans over the people of other countries. We moan also about an oppressive Plutocracy. There is no such thing in this country except that we are all Plutocrats as compared with the average

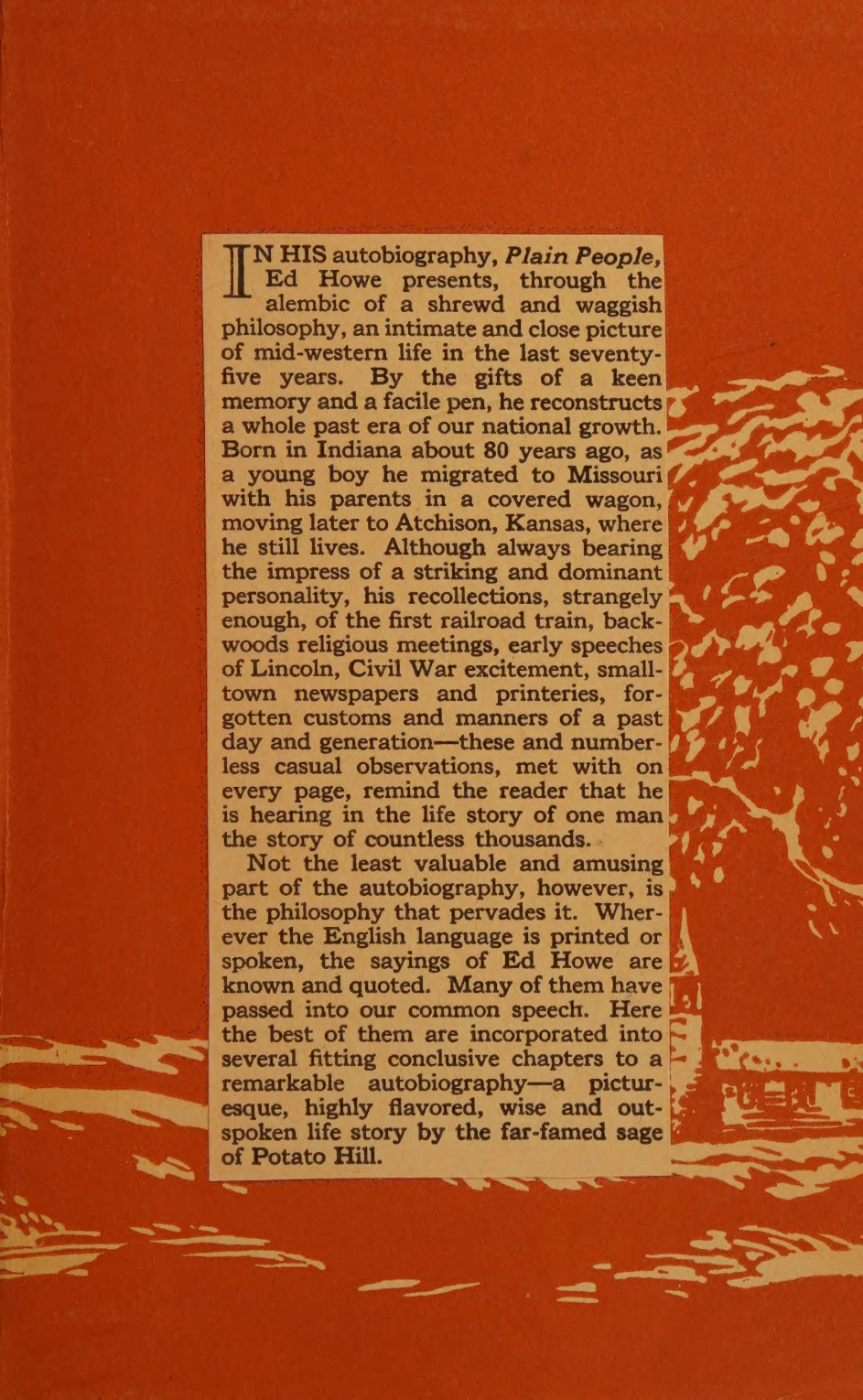
citizens in other countries. . . . There are a few simple principles of right taught, if not always obeyed, around the world. Probably no one living to-day, asked to write ten commandments for the guidance of men, would advocate adultery, drunkenness, thievery, impoliteness, idleness, filth, cruelty, slavery, ignorance or murder. . . . One of the things taught by sentimentalists is that we should Be Big, and Forgive Injuries. It is a foolish notion. It is by punishing those who offend that we establish such order and decency as we have. If we cheerfully forgive those who offend against our plain rights, thieves and ruffians will control instead of worthy men. . . . I have the greatest respect and admiration for the men who have really acquired an education, and make use of it. But I do not much respect those who have been through college, and not acquired an education. . . . If you can forgive the magnificence and vanity of a successful politician, why are you unable to forgive a successful business man? Every time I strike a match, or turn an electric button, or use the telephone, I am indebted to a business man, but if in debt to any politician, I do not know it. . . . The history of mankind is one long record of giving revolution another trial, and limping back at last to sanity, safety and work. . . . I do not greatly care for the one man strutting at the top, but sincerely admire the millions doing very well a little lower down. The number of men who get along well enough, in spite of human ills, and with no great intelligence, is enormous. . . . What great amounts of money are spent by parents on educating their children! And how often children become contemptible while in school, and

meanly wrangle with parents about money! And how often education thus acquired is valueless! I wonder that educators do not think of the sacrifices made by parents in sending them pupils, and resolve to get rid of everything unnecessary. . . . Not only the wicked suffer. The weak suffer, as do the inefficient, careless and impolite. The ignorant, the incapable, are imposed on first. . . . The least profitable profession in the world is that of a thief. There never was one who made a success at it. He cannot marry unless he marries a woman who is not at all particular; he can't build a home, because he must always be ready to run away. He cannot know the joys of honest friendship; he cannot be elected county treasurer, to the legislature, to congress, or to the presidency, as may an honest man. . . . I have lived a long time without knowing a miser, but know almost no one who is not foolishly extravagant. . . . In the last hundred years there has been wonderful progress. We have had big decade after big decade of accomplishment: important and useful discoveries, one after another, have stalked into the world's history. Let these things be remembered to offset the meanness of which men may be honestly convicted. . . . A gentleman recently wrote: "The average man does not know he is on the wrong road until he has traveled nearly or quite to the end of it." This is good writing, but bad sense. The right road bristles with signboards, and, when you turn into the wrong road, thousands of people run after you, waving their arms and shouting warning. . . . It is too bad that the vicious thing known as Suspicion is frequently warranted. . . . I was almost persuaded, when young, that life is not

easier because certain of the population are constantly working for evil, and prevent many improvements that might be made. I do not think so now; I believe we all want the world improved, and that changes long demanded have not been made because we ask too much. . . . James J. Hill, the railroad builder, did much for himself, but vastly more for the Northwest. After his brief strut on the stage, the neighbors who stood beside his grave found he was taking nothing out of the world except a single suit of clothes. He may have thought during the days of his activity he was working for himself, but he was really working for mankind. What he did for himself he wasn't able to keep, but the Northwest has what he gave it, and will be able to keep it until the end of time. . . . Our best and most useful men are those who go forward and occupy the forward positions, and not those who only look forward. . . . It is every man's natural duty to make a success of his life, and this he may do without being a hero. One may do very well who does not forever strive; not a great deal of genius is necessary to meet the requirements of life. The rules we are asked to obey were made for our benefit, we assisted in making them, and they are easier than neglect of them. . . . Every business establishment is in danger of ruin because of the clamor of employes for shorter hours, and their victory would ruin it. Therefore every employer should have some sympathy from the public; not too much, but enough to keep his doors open and machinery going. There is not a sound institution in this country that does not have somewhere in its shadows a lot of young democrats mouthing the false doctrine that when the sound men are out of the way, unsound men will manage better.

. . . I suppose I am stingy. Well, why not? When I look back at the extravagant and shiftless I have known, and note their terrible punishment, I am almost proud of being stingy. I have had a home, a roof for my workshop, to build; children to educate: kin to bury—so many respectable uses for money I could not afford to throw it away, as do these who apologize for shiftlessness by telling stingy stories on the frugal. . . . Everywhere there is respect for the efficient man; contempt for the inefficient, the beggar. Even in a pirate crew, the most capable cut-throat is captain; his followers may hate and fear him, but not enough to be willing to do without his ability as fighter and leader. . . . A magazine lately referred to American prosperity as "vulgar." I believe that so far as we exhibit national vulgarity it is exhibited in the various bread lines, and that the vulgarity is displayed by those in the bread lines, and not by those able to support them. In a country so rich most men succeed, and all may, I cannot regard prosperity as vulgar. . . . A good many years ago I was driven through Yellowstone Park in a stagecoach by a plain man called Doc Wilson, of whom I became quite fond in the course of five days. When we parted, he said: "Well, good-bye; take care of yourself." It is the greatest human philosophy; no one will or can do it for you. And there is plenty, if you will look for your share with reasonable vigor and intelligence. Nature has never yet produced a creature without first providing for its needs; man's greatest fault has always been too much preaching and not enough work. . . . Well, good-bye; take care of yourself.

THE END

IN HIS autobiography, *Plain People*, Ed Howe presents, through the alembic of a shrewd and waggish philosophy, an intimate and close picture of mid-western life in the last seventy-five years. By the gifts of a keen memory and a facile pen, he reconstructs a whole past era of our national growth. Born in Indiana about 80 years ago, as a young boy he migrated to Missouri with his parents in a covered wagon, moving later to Atchison, Kansas, where he still lives. Although always bearing the impress of a striking and dominant personality, his recollections, strangely enough, of the first railroad train, backwoods religious meetings, early speeches of Lincoln, Civil War excitement, small-town newspapers and printeries, forgotten customs and manners of a past day and generation—these and numberless casual observations, met with on every page, remind the reader that he is hearing in the life story of one man the story of countless thousands.

Not the least valuable and amusing part of the autobiography, however, is the philosophy that pervades it. Wherever the English language is printed or spoken, the sayings of Ed Howe are known and quoted. Many of them have passed into our common speech. Here the best of them are incorporated into several fitting conclusive chapters to a remarkable autobiography—a picturesque, highly flavored, wise and outspoken life story by the far-famed sage of Potato Hill.